# Redeemed and Reprimanded John 8:1-15

What is forgiveness? What does it look like to forgive someone else? [discuss]

The psychological definition of forgiveness is: a conscious, deliberate decision to release feelings of resentment or vengeance toward a person or group who has harmed you, regardless of whether they actually deserve your forgiveness.

This gets us closer, but is still not a complete Biblical definition of forgiveness. Unfortunately, there is no one verse that tells us what forgiveness is, so we have to mine the scriptures. From this process we find that there are characteristics of forgiveness that affect the way we forgive and additional elements of God’s forgiveness that are not required of us.

Christian forgiveness:

* Forgiveness teaches: 2 Chronicles 6:27
* Forgiveness recognizes sin: 2 Chronicles 6:39
* Forgiveness is ongoing and repeated: Numbers 14:19  
   Matthew 18:21-22
* Forgiveness is gracious and comforting: Hosea 14:2  
   2 Corinthians 2:7
* Forgiveness is a heart issue: Matthew 18:35
* Forgiveness can include rebuke: Luke 17:3
* Forgiveness recognizes ignorance: Luke 23:34
* Forgiveness influences community: 2 Corinthians 2:10
* Forgiveness bears with others: Colossians 3:13

God’s Forgiveness:

* God’s Forgiveness is for God’s sake: Daniel 9:19
* God’s Forgiveness grants mercy: 1 Kings 8:50
* God’s Forgiveness restores: 2 Chronicles 6:25
* God’s Forgiveness forgets sin: Jeremiah 31:34  
   Isaiah 43:25, Hebrews 8:12
* God’s Forgiveness cleanses and purifies: Jeremiah 33:8  
   1 John 1:9

When we are forgiven by God, he pays the penalty for our sins, we call that being redeemed. The words translated redeemed indicate two ideas…purchasing something of value from the market and ransoming someone who has been captured by an enemy.

In American culture, we have a misconception that forgiveness means not mentioning the sin again, acting as if it never happened and moving on from here. Forgive and forget seems to be a western ideal, but it is not the Christian ideal. As we saw above, only God has the power to forget sin, we do not. The word forget means to not be reminded. God still remembers the event occurred, but no longer considers it in the way He deals with us.

The best human analogy for this is to think of two neighbors who served in the same unit in the Vietnam war. They both saw and experienced the same atrocities, they both came home to the same town. One of the men gets upset any time he is reminded of Vietnam. He hates the Vietnamese and is bitter about the things he suffered when he returned to the United States. The other man still has flashbacks about what happened, but has chosen to bring healing, he chooses to serve disadvantaged people in the Vietnamese community and has even traveled to Vietnam to help remove land mines. Both of them know what happens, but one has chosen not to remember.

As we study John 8:1-15, we see Jesus giving us an illustration of how we are to forgive. From this we learn the hypocrisy of being judgmental. We discover that reprimand should follow self-examination. We realize that redemption requires warning. And we celebrate that true forgiveness reveals God’s standards.

## Hypocrisy of being judgmental John 8:1-6a

“**1** ¶ But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. **2** At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. **3** The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group **4** and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. **5** In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" **6** They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

Jesus is teaching the people in the temple, rather than respecting the law of God, they did what was politically expedient. Stoning, or any other form of violence was not allowed in the temple, those to be stoned were to be taken to the edge of the community. In addition, the law required that both people involved in the adultery be stoned.

This was a trap. If Jesus said to stone her, they would have said he was not a Biblical teacher because He advocated violence in the temple and did not condemn the woman. Likewise, if He had said to let her go they would have condemned Him for not stoning her as the Law required.

The hypocrisy of the teachers and Pharisees raises questions. Who was the man and where was he? If they caught them “in the act” they both should have been there. Where were the witnesses that caught them in the act? The Law requires that the witnesses be the first ones to cast stones. Were there at least two witnesses? The Bible requires that people only be condemned on the testimony of two or more witnesses.

Often when people are judgmental they are also hypocritical. Check yourself. Are you being just in your accusation?

## Reprimand should follow self-examination John 8:6b-9

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. **7** When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." **8** Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. **9** At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.

This is the only place in scripture that we see Jesus writing. We have no idea what He wrote, so the writing itself was not important. Some speculate that He was just doodling in the sand as a way of ignoring them. Some believe He started writing the requirements of the law for stoning someone who has committed adultery. Some believe he was writing the dates when these leaders had been involved in their own sins. Some believe He was writing the names of those with whom they sinned.

The leaders kept pushing Him, so He said, “if any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.” This is not to say that someone needs to be sinless before they can participate in legal punishments. If that were the case, only Jesus would ever be able to participate in a punishment. Jesus was saying that if they were without sin in this matter they could cast the first stone. If they cast the stone, they would be admitting that they were witnesses and observed the act of adultery. Jesus is also saying that they should not be guilty of similar sin in their own life.

As they leave from the oldest to the youngest, perhaps the older look through their lives and recognize more places where they have sinned. Perhaps (and hopefully) the older are remembering the requirements of the Law and recognizing that they had violated both God’s and their own standards in their eagerness to trap Jesus. Whatever happened, the wisdom of age often recognizes its hypocrisy long before the zeal of youth.

In Matthew 7:3-5 and Luke 6:41-42, Jesus tells people not to point out the speck in their brother’s eye when there is a plank in their own eye. Check yourself. Are you bringing accusation against others when you have not yet dealt with similar sin in your own life?

## Redemption requires Warning John 8:10-11

**10** Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" **11** "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

It should go without saying, but you cannot effectively forgive unless there is something to forgive. Imagine I write you a letter saying, “I forgive you for not inviting me over to have dinner with your family.” Would that make sense? While I would enjoy having a meal with you, I have no right or expectation of doing so. To forgive you when you did nothing wrong is the height of arrogance and elevates my desires and expectations to the level of God’s laws. On the other hand, if you invited me to join you for Easter dinner and then canceled the invitation without reason, or if you publicly invited everyone in the church except me, then there would be a reason to forgive. Even then, however, I cannot offer forgiveness unless you are aware of the wrong you have done. I need to approach with making you aware of the sin. A statement like, “While I forgive you, I need you to know that it really disappointed me when you cancelled our dinner,” or “I really felt rejected when you invited everyone but me, but I assume that was not your intent, so I forgive you.”

In this same way, Jesus does not condemn the woman caught in adultery, but He also warns her that He recognizes her sin. The pharisees were wrong in the way that they used her, but their wrongness did not excuse what she had done to be in that situation. In today’s world, Jesus’ actions would be seen as victim blaming. The world will say, “How dare you say that she did anything to deserve this harassment.” Because of this we are afraid to confront sin. Don’t get me wrong, it is always sin and evil for someone to assault another person, but it can also be wrong of the person who was assaulted to wear provocative clothes.

It is far more loving to let someone know that their behavior is inappropriate than to “forgive them” and then become even more upset when the same poor behavior repeats. You are not being godly if your acts of forgiveness do not also convey guidance and teaching on how to avoid the problem in the future. It may be that they need the solution that tells them how to avoid what they previously did.

Check yourself. When you forgive, do you also identify both a problem and a solution for the future?

## Forgiveness reveals God’s standards John 8:12-15

**12** ¶ When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." **13** The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid." **14** Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. **15** You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one.

Remember, these people Jesus is talking to had seen the whole interaction with the leaders and the woman caught in adultery. He tells them that He is the light of the world and brings life which upsets the Pharisees. They weren’t offended by the hypocritical abuse of the law, but are offended that He would claim to be the light of the world. They knew He was referring to Isaiah 49:6, Isaiah 60:3 and other passages where the Messiah is referred to as the light of the nations. They say that his claims cannot be true because He makes claims about Himself. He turns their words back on them and points out that (as we saw last week) they claim to not know where He came from. But the biggest statement He makes refers to His forgiveness. “You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one.”

Jesus had not condemned the woman caught in adultery, but in John 5 He said that the Father has entrusted all judgment to Him (John 5:22). This brings us to the paradox of Jesus’ Judgment. Jesus has the right and authority to judge. As God He has the requirement to judge or He is unjust. So how does He say, I pass judgment on no one?

Jesus will one day judge both the living and the dead (2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5), but that is not His purpose. In His first coming, Jesus did not come to condemn the world but to save the world (John 3:17). In the last days, He will judge, in addition we judge ourselves by our belief or refusal to believe (John 3:18).

If Jesus had condemned the woman caught in adultery, or even just walked away and ignored the situation, He would not have had the opportunity to share the truth. When a parent forgives their child’s killer or a woman forgives her abuser, it is so rare that it often gets noted on the news. The world does not expect forgiveness, but revenge.

Check yourself. Is your forgiving attitude news to the world? Are you willing to forgive, even if the other person doesn’t if it means a chance to share the gospel?

Forgiveness is not easy. It is a repeated commitment. It takes God’s grace. It is easier to either hold a grudge or to dismiss the issue. True forgiveness acknowledges the wrong done and then chooses to release the offender from any punishment or grudge that you might desire to hold or even might have the right to hold. Forgiveness is not forgetting, if someone has endangered others, we cannot pretend it didn’t happen. Forgiving does not remove consequences, if I forgive a murderer, it is still appropriate for them to spend time in jail.

Ultimately, if you don’t forgive, it says nothing, good or bad, about the other person, it does, however speak volumes about you.

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## \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of being judgmental John 8:1-6a

When people are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ they are also hypocritical.

Are you being \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in your accusation?

## Reprimand should follow \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ John 8:6b-9

This is not to say that someone needs to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to participate in a punishment.

Don’t point out the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in your brother’s eye when there is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in your own eye. Matthew 7:3-5, Luke 6:41-42

Are you bringing accusation against others when you have not yet dealt with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ sin in your own life?

## Redemption requires \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ John 8:10-11

You cannot forgive unless there is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to forgive.

Forgiveness must convey \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and teaching.

When you forgive, do you also identify both a problem and a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for the future?

## Forgiveness reveals God’s \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ John 8:12-15

They are offended because they knew He was referring to being the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Isaiah 49:6, Isaiah 60:3

Jesus will one day \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ both the living and the dead  
 2 Timothy 4:1, 1 Peter 4:5

Jesus did not come to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the world but to save the world. John 3:17

We judge ourselves by our \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to believe. John 3:18

Is your forgiving attitude news to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

Are you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to forgive if it means a chance to share the gospel?

## Forgiveness

Forgiveness is not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

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Forgiving does not remove \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

If you don’t forgive it speaks volumes about \_\_\_\_\_\_.