



## TIME OF GRACE®

# Dirty Bible Words: The F-Word Study Notes

## Summary

"Forgiveness" might not seem like an offensive word until we think about what it actually means: giving grace to people who deserve only punishment. Culture would prefer to cancel, label, and dismiss the guilty, but God's f-word interrupts our system of justice and offers the grace of sending sins away.

- Dirty words are offensive \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
- Biblical forgiveness = \_\_\_\_\_.
- Colossians 3:13 - Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.
  - Genesis 26:12 — Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the Lord blessed him.
- 3 offensive aspects of forgiveness:
  - \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_

- Matthew 18:21-22 – Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

- \_\_\_\_\_

- Matthew 6:14-15 – For If you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

- Colossians 3:13

- The key to forgiveness = \_\_\_\_\_.

## Points to Ponder

1. Why is biblical forgiveness an essential part of long-term relationships (couples, parents/kids, friends)? Name two examples from your personal life.
2. Meditate on the lengthy teaching on forgiveness in Matthew 18:21-35. What else does Jesus teach you about forgiveness from this text?
3. Agree/Disagree: The most financially generous people are the ones who realize just how much Jesus has forgiven them. (After answering, read Luke 7:36-50.)
4. Do you know someone who struggles to forgive others or themselves? Share today’s message with them.

## Homework for Next Week

Read Search the internet for “Bible verses on submission”.

Time of Grace Ministry  
**Dirty Bible Words: The F-Word**  
Colossians 3:13, Genesis 26:12, Matthew 18:21-22, Matthew 6:14-15  
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There's no official list in a dictionary that you can find of the good words and the bad words. Dirty words, depend. It depends on where you are, and with whom you are, and when you are, and what kind of people are surrounding you.

And you've seen this, right? Back in the day even Hollywood wouldn't put certain words into a movie. It was just inappropriate for that time in history. And yet now, I mean, those same words, you put them as the titles on book covers and prop them up on the shelves for everyone to see. We say these words in our speeches and, you know, presidential gatherings. They're not inappropriate. They used to be, but things have changed or -- are you old enough to remember some of the 1980's comedies that you thought were hilarious and then you watch them now and you think, ooh. Like, it used to be funny, but our understanding of certain words has changed.

Now, even in the Bible, there's no page in the back. I mean, God cares about how you use your words, but he doesn't say, "Here are the Christian words and here are the non-Christian words." What offends people, what feels inappropriate or not, it really depends on where you are and when you are.

So, grab a pen and write this down. Here is my definition as we kick off this series of A Dirty Word. Dirty words are offensive here and now. Alright, so maybe over there in another culture, in another group of people, they won't offend, but here they do. And maybe back in the day, people weren't bothered or in the future they won't be bothered. But right now, when we use them it just -- it feels less than appropriate. It feels like something you shouldn't say among mixed company. Dirty words are the words that are offensive here and now.

And that's why I really want you to think about dirty Bible words. Did you know that there are some words in this book that Jesus was not embarrassed to say, and the apostles, who were filled with the Holy Spirit, were not embarrassed to write? They don't come with an apology or an explanation or an asterisk. The words are right here and yet when we read them today there's something about them that feels, I don't know, not quite right.

Words feel more dangerous than beneficial. They feel antiquated, old-fashioned, maybe not appropriate. I could, you know, read a passage, let's say, about submission. "And wives submit to your husbands." Submit to the governing authorities. Submit to your pastoral leaders. And I bet there is something in you that would just -- it would feel dangerous, right? Feels like that's something that could

cause more harm than do more good. It feels offensive here and maybe in other cultures it's not the case, and maybe back in Biblical times it wasn't, but for us it does.

Or think about the 'D' word, doctrine, dogma. Can you imagine if that was on the sign outside of our church, "Free dogma inside." There'd be more places to sit, I think. I mean, it feels controlling, manipulative, like we're brainwashing people into religious dogma. The word doctrine appears all the time in the Bible. It didn't bother people back then, but for us, something about modern America just feels off or -- I think about the concept of hell. Alright, ask your grandparents, if they would have heard in church as much about hell as they did about heaven. But is that the experience today? You'll find church art. Go to the Sistine chapel and you'll see glorious depictions of heaven and just brutal depictions of hell. They weren't embarrassed by it hundreds of years ago, but today in our culture it feels like controlling people with the torture, and the flames, and the fire.

There are some things about us right now that just don't feel right, even though they appear in this book. And so, here's my goal. My goal for the next few weeks is to try to figure out, why is that? What is it about the culture that you and I live in, the people that you and I love, that makes these certain words right here and right now feel offensive to us.

Let's analyze our culture through the lens of these words. And then, let's ask ourselves a question, "Why would Jesus think these are not dirty words?" If Jesus is the essence of truth and love, if everything He says and everything He thinks is for the good of your heart, your soul, and your eternity, why would Jesus so freely talk about these concepts and use these words that make us so nervous?

So, in this series we're going to talk about the S word, submit. We're going to talk about the D word, doctrine and dogma. We're not just going to spell H-E double hockey sticks. We're going to talk about the biblical teaching of hell. And today, to kick things off I want to talk to you about the 'F' word, forgiveness. And you might be thinking, "Pastor Mike, one of these things is not like the other. Like, being forgiving. I want to be a forgiving person and we should forgive each other. That doesn't bother me like the concept of hell. What's so bad about forgiveness?"

Well, give it a second. Today, you're going to find out that the Bible pushes the concept of forgiveness to uncomfortable extremes. And what Jesus said about forgiveness is so challenging and so difficult that it will offend part of you and yet at the same time, the concept of extreme Biblical forgiveness is our peace and our joy and the most amazing thing we can envision.

Today, let's talk about one of the Bible's most offensive teachings, the concept of forgiveness. Now, a few of you who were here a few years ago might remember we had a whole sermon series on forgiveness where I compared sin to a stone. When someone sins against you, when they say something, or do something, or you need

them to say something or do something and they're not there to do it, it's like they've thrown a stone that hits you and hurts you.

But here is the thing. After someone else's sin hits, right here it sits. The thing that they did wrong is within arm's reach, which means you and I, when it comes to the people who've wounded us in small or big ways, we have a huge decision to make whether or not to forgive. What will we do with this wrong that has been first done to us?

Now, let's talk about what forgiveness isn't before I have you fill in the blank of what forgiveness is. People these days, and I would say especially church people, get the Bible's definition of forgiveness wrong because they say things like this, "Well, you have to forgive and forget." You know where you find that in this book? Nowhere. Nowhere. In fact, it's pretty ridiculous. If you think that to forgive someone you have to forget what they said or what they did, and not only does that seem impossible 98% of the time, but that's not at all what God says. I mean, how -- if you were raised with a verbally abusive mother, how can you possibly forget all of that? If you're in a relationship and someone wasn't faithful to you and they just controlled you and hurt you, how do you just scrub your mind off those memories?

That's not at all what it means to forgive in the Bible, nor does it mean to say something is okay. People get that confused too. "It's not -- I forgive you. It's not a big deal, or it's fine. It's okay." Actually, in the Bible it's just the opposite. If you need to forgive me for something it means I've sinned against you, and sin is such a serious deal that it led the Son of God to a cross. So, if you choose to forgive someone, you're not saying that, "It was fine. It wasn't a big deal, you know, we're only human." No, to forgive someone literally says, "You have done something that God declares as wrong, bad, in fact, evil and wicked." You don't have to minimize the offense that someone did against you to forgive them of that sin. You could forgive someone who is unfaithful to you and still file for a divorce. You could forgive your abuser and still call the authorities and ask them to be brought to justice. And you could forgive me for something I did in our friendship but maybe you couldn't trust me again. You could forgive someone at school who hurt you, and yet still avoid them. Right?

To forgive doesn't mean we go back to the way things were. Sometimes sin comes with consequences. Sometimes parents forgive their children, but they still discipline them. In the same way, sin sometimes messes things up and you can forgive someone even though the relationship has changed.

None of that is what biblical forgiveness is so let me define what it is. Write this down. Forgiveness, this is my own definition, it means to leave the stone alone, right? They sinned against you and here is the sin. You know about it. You remember it. It hurts you deeply. To forgive someone is to leave that stone alone. "Even though I could pick this up and do to you what you first did to me, I'll leave this stone alone." So, the Apostle Paul said here in Colossians 3:13. Paul wrote, "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

Get ready for this next section because there are three things about biblical forgiveness that push this concept to an offensive extreme. I want you to write them down. Here's the first one. The first thing offensive about biblical forgiveness is the size. Because Jesus does not limit the size of the sin that we must forgive. It might feel like a little annoying pebble of, you know, the tone in his voice or it might be something that just left you traumatized when you were younger. But Jesus says it's all the same, forgive.

I think about this sometimes when there's some court case after a horrific crime and the survivors are left there with the person who was discovered to be an abuser of minors. Or, hear the shooter is, and we have the moms and the dads of the kids who were killed. And they get up to speak and -- have you seen this? And they say, "I will never forgive you for what you did. I hope you rot in," -- And if Jesus was in the courtroom, what would He say? "No. Even him, forgive." There's nothing so big in your past. There is no one who hurts you so deeply that Jesus won't look you in the eye with compassion for what's happened to you and say, "Even that."

And you say, "Jesus, I mean, my mom just, like every day, I was never good enough for her. I just grew up thinking I was trash. I had no self-worth. I had to go through counseling for years to escape her. But I think -- I thought, when you got married everyone keeps the vow and then, she didn't keep the vow. He didn't keep the vow. And I wanted to work on it, but they were done with it. Then they went to court, and they wanted my money, and they wanted the kids full time. Forgive someone like that?" "Mhm-mm." "Now, Jesus, he left me broke. She left me broken. You're saying there's no limit on the size of the sin you want me to forgive?" And Jesus says, "No." There're no asterisks, it just says forgive.

And if that weren't offensive enough, here's number two. Jesus also talks about the amount of forgiveness. Biblical forgiveness is not like the express checkout at the grocery store, you know, maximum 15 items. That's what Jesus' friend, Peter thought here in Matthew 18. "Peter says to Jesus, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'" "Four hundred and ninety times? And then I should keep forgiving?" And Jesus says, "Mmm." "The person who didn't just wrong me and learn from their mistake but they sinned, and they sinned, and they sinned. And, you know, my mom is always this way, and my ex keeps doing stuff like that, and my neighbor he's never happy with anything." "Yeah, even the most serial sinner you have ever met, forgive."

They will never reach the limit where you can flip from Christian forgiveness to Christian bitterness. The phrase is an oxymoron. "Get rid of bitterness," Jesus says. "Get rid of the arrogance," Jesus said, "and just forgive." You may need to set some boundaries and stay from people who continually hurt you, but you are never allowed to get them back. Instead, Jesus says, "Forgive."

And then, the most offensive part of all, number three, necessity. Jesus says that if you will follow Him, if you will be a Christian, you need to do this. Forgiving someone who hurts you is not extra credit or AP Christianity. It's not overtime. It is what it means to be a Christian. Quick show of hands. How many of you are familiar with the Lord's prayer? That famous prayer Jesus taught in Matthew 6? You know, "Our Father in heaven," that one. You might know it talks about forgiveness. "Forgive us of our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." Do you any of you know what Jesus said immediately after He got done teaching that prayer? And here's what He said, Matthew 6. Jesus said, "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Reminds me of the story of Elisabeth Elliot. You heard that name before? Elisabeth Elliot was married to Jim Elliot. They were a fresh faced 20-something newlywed couple. And Jim Elliot had a passion to share this news of Christianity with people from other cultures. And that's why Jim, for two or three years, studied the language of a tribe from eastern Ecuador called the Huaorani people. He studied, he studied, he studied. He invested so much time into his life. And then, for months he and his friends flew a little plane over the jungle making contact with this remote tribe, dropping gifts to show their kindness and their good intentions.

One day, in fact, they landed the plane. They got out and they met with a group of Huaorani warriors and had an amazing exchange, kindness, gifts, love. They hoped it would open a door for them to share the good news of Jesus Christ. But soon, the door slammed shut. The next time Jim Elliot and his friend landed, a group of warriors came out of the jungle and murdered all of the men. Jim Elliot's body was found floating in a nearby river, which meant that these men had picked up a boulder sized stone and crushed this new wife's heart. And here she was with Jim's daughter just ten months old at the time of his murder. She'd never have her biological father again.

So, do you know what she did? She left the stone alone. In fact, Elisabeth Elliot, herself, started to study the language that her husband had studied. And after two years of pouring herself into the culture she and now her three-year-old daughter went to move into the village with the very villagers, who had murdered her husband and taken away her daughter's father. The rest of the story is almost too good to believe. You can read about it online after church is done. It was so good, in fact, that they made a huge movie out of it, the story of Jim Elliot and his wife, Elisabeth. But when the scriptwriters wrote the story to the movie, did you know this? They lied. They felt they had to. As they were showing up to front the news of the murder, trying to process the emotions of these people who had just been sinned against so grievously, the scriptwriters wrote in bitterness and a lack of forgiveness and a desire for vengeance.

In fact, when the family itself saw the script, they said to the ones making the movie, "Wait, wait, wait. This isn't how it was. I never hated those men. We never wanted to get back at them or get even." Which the writers knew, but here's what the writer

said, "Your mom, Elisabeth, knew God. Most people who see this movie don't know a God like that." That's how you do it. How do you forgive the people who sin so often in such big ways against you? Elisabeth's story says, "When you know God, when you believe that the story of forgiveness didn't start when they threw that stone but when you threw that stone and yet God forgave." Remember the passage I read to you before Colossians 3:13? Here's what it says, "Forgive," yep, "as the Lord forgave you." Past tense. Before the present tense command comes to leave the stone alone. To treat that person in a gracious way. Before that, comes this, "The Lord forgave you."

Let me ask you a basic question for Christianity. How much did the Lord forgive you? When Jesus went to the cross on that Friday, did he just die for that time that you accidentally went over the speed limit? Oh, he did and the bigger sins, and the biggest sins, and the one you don't even want to think about. It didn't matter the size, He forgave. Did Jesus just give you one strike, maybe two at bats when He went to the cross for you? No. Didn't matter the amount, the frequency. Those of us who have histories of addiction know that if Jesus hadn't given us a second chance, we would never make it. But instead, He didn't forgive once or twice, or seven times, or seventy-seven times, or seventy times seven times. He went to the cross with his unbelievable passion to forgive all of it. And the crazy thing was, he didn't need to. You and I have a moral obligation to forgive because we are sinners ourselves, but Jesus was sinless. And yet, out of the goodness of his own heart, his mercy and compassion for people like us was so profound that He went anyway, and He forgave all of it.

Write this down. This is the key to Christian forgiveness. It's to remember that when it comes to you and Jesus, Jesus paid it all, all of it. The debt that you could not pay he paid it all. He didn't split the check. He's not just the God of second chances. He is the Savior who looked at all of the sin, every sin, your worst sin and said, "I forgive you."

In fact, the other day I was doing some math about the amazingness of Jesus' forgiveness. Imagine for a second, here's Jesus on the stage and He looks at all of you and says, "Hey, I got a deal for you today. I'm willing to forgive 99% of the days that you have lived on earth and all you have to do to get to heaven and be a good person 1% of your life. How about that? Just 1%, be like me. Love God with your whole heart, love all of your neighbors as yourself and I will give you paradise forever and ever." Which sounds amazing until you do the math, and you say, "Average American life 77 years, 1% is .77 years or 282 days. So, I have to be like Jesus for 282 days. I don't know if that's going to work for me."

So, Jesus comes back. He says, "Okay. How about this? How about I forgive you for 99.9% of your life, and all you have to do to get to heaven is be good .1% of your life? With a decimal point. .077 years, 28.2 days, just be like Jesus for the month of February and you get eternity." Who's in?



So, Jesus comes back. He says, "Okay, okay, how about this? How about this? I will forgive you for 99.99% of your life and all you have to do is be good for .01%, move the decimal point, .0077 years or 2.82 days. I'll drop you off at school on Monday. I'll pick you up after practice on Wednesday. And if you were just a good kid for 2.82 days, I'll let you celebrate with me for eternity." I told my daughter this yesterday, she said, "Uhh." 2.82 days and you could...

So Jesus comes back and said, "Okay, okay. How about this? How about I forgive you for 99.999% of your life and to get paradise in heaven where there's nothing wrong, all you have to do is be good .001% of your life. That's .00077 years or .282 days which works out to 6.8 hours." Jesus says, "I'll drop you off at the front door at work. I'll pick you up early, 3 o'clock and all you've got to do is be a good person and you get heaven." And you walk in the door and Chuck walks in after you. Do you work with a Chuck? And someone so hard to be patient, so hard to be kind, so hard to be forgiving. You start worrying about the first email that you get, and you forget your trust and faith in God -- think about that. If Jesus Christ forgave you 99.999% of the time you would still freak out about being good enough to get to heaven.

And that is why I love, love what the Christian faith says, because it says that you don't fix your karma. You don't balance your scales. You don't work hard enough to be a good person. Who could ever be good enough for God? Instead, we have a God who came down and He paid it all. Everything is possible when you start with a forgiving God. That's why I want to invite you to please stand and we're going to pray a prayer that Jesus taught us to pray. It's about God's will being done among us. It's about King Jesus being strong in our hearts. It's about God's name being lifted up as special. It's about forgiveness that we need and forgiveness that we give. Would you please join me in the classic words of Jesus, the words of the Lord's prayer?

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sinned against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

My brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another as you forgive and show grace. And may the Lord fill you with his joy and his peace. The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord, make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with his forgiveness and his favor and give you peace.

And all God's people say, "Amen."