

THE UNFORGIVING CHRISTIAN

by

William N. Harding

Associate Professor of the Old Testament

One of the blessings we enjoy as a company of redeemed people is the blessing of Christian fellowship. This fellowship is precious! This fellowship is sweet! But there is one thing that can break this fellowship and that is an unforgiving spirit.

How often have we witnessed the following scene! ¹³⁰ ~~Tow~~ individuals are saved and are faithfully serving the Lord. In the course of their service, one offends the other, and the one who is offended refuses to forgive the one who offended him, and so they go their separate ways, and that fellowship they had once so much enjoyed no longer exists.

This certainly is not pleasing to the Lord, for the Lord doesn't desire that fellowship between brethren be broken, but that it be maintained. But if this fellowship is to be maintained, we must avoid an unforgiving spirit, and be willing to forgive the one who offends us.

Jesus discusses this subject of forgiveness in Matthew 18:21-35. Let us look at it under the following five headings. First, the meaning of forgiveness. It means that we are to treat the one who offends us on a personal level just as though the offense had not been committed.

In verse 21 of this passage we read, "Then came Peter to Him," i.e., Jesus "and said Lord, how (often) shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?"