



Feeling Forgiven

God's forgiveness is an incredible spiritual gift. It restores our otherwise disrupted relationship with the Holy One. Although forgiveness is not primarily about feelings, as a highly significant byproduct it should engender deep feelings of relief and freedom.

Unfortunately, it does not always evolve that way. We are inclined to hang on to our negative feelings of guilt even after we have properly gone through an act of contrition and confession. This is especially true if we are burdened by some serious act of transgression. Let it be known, however, that a more grievous act on our part does not necessitate multiple requests for God to forgive us, while lesser offenses require less effort.

The Good News is that God stands ready at all times to extend complete forgiveness to us, regardless of the weight of the offense, and does so before we even acknowledge

our failure. The depth or degree of our trespass is not an issue for God, although it often is for us.

While we may move more quickly through the forgiveness process when dealing with our lesser transgressions, we tend to struggle and remain engaged with our burden much longer when the issue is more serious, at least as we perceive it. Sometimes we hang on to our guilt interminably because we are incredulous that God could or would ever forgive us of such terrible infractions.

As we live life we will inevitably stumble along the way countless times. This is a given reality. Therefore we remain in constant need of forgiveness. That constancy should be our cue about the nature of God's forgiveness. *God's forgiveness is always at least one size larger than our worst sin*, and is one of the greatest spiritual gifts we ever receive. Mysteriously, it is ever present awaiting our need. In most instances it is activated before our acts of contrition and actually becomes the instigator and motivator of our confession.

The vision we need to develop and retain is that of the *waiting father* in Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son. The eagerness that God has to make things right with us is beautifully depicted in that epic story. God always desires and boldly acts to bring healing of any breach in our relationship with our Heavenly Father. *God is forever more willing to forgive us than we are to ask or receive it gracefully and thankfully.* That is what the gift of Jesus is all about in large measure.

Not only is there complete healing of any breach in our relationship with God, in this merciful healing, the *design is that our feeling of being forgiven should accompany this great spiritual gift.*



Since we always live in a condition of *missing the mark* we need to be aware as God's children that *we also live in a constant condition of forgiveness*. God does not keep score, but lovingly and continuously takes us off the hook. Along with that tremendous spiritual gift, *we need to receive the complete gift and feel the relief and freedom that God's forgiveness bestows*.