Our Forgiving Of Others

By *Ron Boatwright*

Jesus in His teaching on prayer and in asking God to forgive us of our sins says, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matthew 6:14-15). Our forgiving others may be difficult, but it is essential if we want God to forgive us of our sins. If we aren't forgiven of God then our sins will separate us from God and we will be eternally lost.

In our striving to be Christ-like we are to try to have the same mind-set that Christ has. Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." According to Jesus, how are we to think of others? "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). Jesus demonstrated this forgiving attitude as He was being nailed to the cross, "Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34). Many of these people were later forgiven of God when they repented and were baptized (Acts 2:38, 41). And also Stephen had a forgiving attitude as he was being stoned to death in Acts 7:60, "Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord do not charge them with this sin'. And when he said this he fell asleep".

We must not hold grudges and have hatred in our hearts for the wrongs others have done to us. God's word says to us "Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, and if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you must also do" (Colossians 3:12-13). We must be forgiving of others if we want God to forgive us so we can go to Heaven.