

# Spiritual Growth Lessons from Christian Ambassadors

## Lesson 27

### *Jesus Came To Bring Life, Not Condemnation!*

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**John 3:16-17 (KJV)** - *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.*

Motivated by his love for the world, God's purpose in sending his Son has always been salvation, not condemnation. If it weren't for God's love, we (sinners) would have been wiped out a long time ago. Rebellion would have separated us from God forever. Make no mistake, God's love and compassion for the sinner is the driving force that "holds back" condemnation.

God's nature is to "forgive" those who are lost in sin; not to "hold" their sins against them. Those who hold grudges against people, refusing to let go of their animosity and forgive, are not expressing the love of God. They are instead expressing hatred, which is the nature of Satan, the *accuser*, the condemner, **Revelation 12:10 (KJV)**

Jesus states upfront the laws that govern spiritual life in God's kingdom. Although we may want to ignore these laws, trying to avoid any of God's spiritual laws is a sin, which can bring dreadful consequences. Forgiveness is one of those unavoidable spiritual laws. Our refusal to forgive others is a sin so serious; it can actually bar us from receiving God's forgiveness for our own sins. Not only that, but it can cut off our life with God altogether. Jesus tells us what is necessary to stay in tune with the spiritual laws of God's kingdom.

**Mark 11:25 (NIV)** - *And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.*

What does this passage mean in terms we can understand? Simply that our Father in heaven is not at liberty to forgive us our sins, as long as we are talking and acting like the devil; *holding* other people's sins against them. If you will recall, Satan was cast out of

heaven for his accusations against the brethren. Breaking spiritual law cost him a place in heaven.

**Revelation 12:10 (KJV)** - *And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.*

Holding people in bondage through constant accusations, is a sin born out of hate. It is a serious offense against God's character and holiness. Why? Without the removal of *guilt* caused by sin, none of us would ever be able to live up to our potential in Christ. We would always feel rejected, put-down and unworthy of God's love and forgiveness, which is exactly how Satan wants us to feel. He wants us to feel like the scum of the earth, so we will stay away from God. By no means does he want us rushing to God with a repentant heart, ready to be cleansed of wrongdoing. Forgiveness allows us the freedom to grow, to experience God's love, and to reach the potential God created in us.

**Bottom line:** There can be no life, no growth, and no spiritual relationship with God without receiving His forgiveness. Since there is no spiritual life with God apart from forgiveness, an unforgiving, accusing spirit is one who is still living in death and condemnation.

**John 3:18 (KJV)** - *He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Forgiveness characterizes those who seek the life that Jesus came to bring. To emphasize our great need, 1) to fully accept the forgiveness of God, and 2) to freely extend that forgiveness to others, Jesus tells the parable of the unforgiving servant.

**Matthew 18:23-35 (NIV)** - *Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his*

*children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.*

*The servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.*

*His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened.*

*Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.*

After reading this parable, we notice right away the great contrast between the debts of the two servants. The first servant owed his master 10,000 talents, which represented a huge debt. Faced with the near impossibility of paying the debt, he fell on his knees and begged for an extension of time. At this point in the parable we can easily picture the compassionate forgiveness of God, to a pleading sinner who owes him a debt that could never be paid back. Having compassion on the servant, the king cancelled the entire debt and let him go free. This action represents the bright side of the parable, which reveals God's love and forgiving nature.

But then comes the dark side of the parable, when the forgiven servant's true character comes out! While leaving the king's presence with his huge debt cancelled, he met up with one of *his* fellow servants who owed him a pittance in comparison. It wouldn't have amounted to more than a few dollars, maybe twenty dollars at most. Nevertheless, grabbing his servant by the throat, he demanded payment! The servant, who had just been forgiven such a huge amount, heard the

exact same pleading he had given before the king, but he had absolutely no compassion on his fellow servant. So, when this servant requested time to repay the small debt, he had the man thrown into prison. The servant's unforgiving attitude didn't set well with his fellow servants. They were so offended by his misdeeds they went and told the king what had happened.

When the king called the servant in, he faced him with severe chastisement. He called him a wicked servant. The wicked servant's unwillingness to forgive his fellow servant was "proof positive" that he had not actually received God's forgiveness in his heart. If God's forgiveness (given by grace) is truly received in a man's heart, it will create a forgiving spirit. It has to, out of necessity, if it is born out of God's grace.

Jesus concludes the parable by pointing to the offense of the unforgiving servant, contrasted with that of a just and holy God. When God's gift of grace is openly scorned, justice is certain. Jesus teaches the hard lesson of *forgiveness* to those who would scoff at God's spiritual laws. It comes with a warning! Unless you can forgive your brother from your heart, you cannot expect your heavenly Father to forgive you.

**Matthew 6:14-15 (NIV)** - *For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.*

**In summary:** Jesus came to bring life, not condemnation! To receive that life and extend it to others, it must be born out of a heart of love and forgiveness, not hate and condemnation. "*He that believeth on him is not condemned...*" (**John 3:18, KJV**). We haven't truly believed and crossed over from death to life, until the well being of our brothers and sisters is as important to us, as it is to our Heavenly Father.

**I John 3:14 (KJV)** - *We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*



**Questions for Personal or Group Study:**

1. What is the driving force that motivates God to "hold back" his condemnation of sinners? **See: John 3:16-17.**
2. If Satan were cast out of heaven for his constant accusations against the believers, what right would we have to live in God's Kingdom if we were to do the same thing (bad mouth the believers)? If we are to serve a Holy God, how are we to treat others? **See: Galatians 6:10**
3. What spiritual law must we follow when we stand praying, if we want to stay in tune with the spiritual life of God's kingdom? **See: Mark 11:25**
4. How does the removal of guilt give us the freedom to grow spiritually and reach the potential God created in us? **See: Romans 8:1-2**
5. What spiritual law does Jesus tell us we are violating when we hold things against anyone? **See: Mark 11:25**
6. In the parable of the *unforgiving servant*, what is the bright side of the parable? What is the dark side of the parable? **See: Matthew 18:23-35.**
7. What is the end result when God's gift of forgiveness is openly scorned? **See: Matthew 6:14-15 and also James 2:12-13**
8. How do we know when we have truly crossed over from death to life? **See: I John 3:14**