



Forgiven That We Might Forgive

PART 2

Corrie Ten Boom (1892 –1983)



- ▶ Dutch Christian
- ▶ Helped Jews escape the Nazi Holocaust in World War II
- ▶ Caught in 1944
- ▶ Sent to Ravensbruck concentration camp
- ▶ Was released due to a clerical error

“When we confess our sins,” I said, “God casts them into the deepest ocean, gone forever.”

And that’s when I saw him, working his way forward against the others. It came back with a rush...this man had been a guard at Ravensbrück concentration camp where we were sent. Now he was in front of me, hand thrust out: “A fine message, fräulein! How good it is to know that, as you say, all our sins are at the bottom of the sea!”

And I, who had spoken so glibly of forgiveness, fumbled in my pocketbook rather than take that hand...I remembered him and the leather crop swinging from his belt. It was the first time since my release that I had been face to face with one of my captors and my blood seemed to freeze. “You mentioned Ravensbrück in your talk,” he was saying. “I was a guard in there.” He did not remember me.

“But since that time,” he went on, “I have become a Christian. I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fräulein”—again the hand came out—“will you forgive me?”

And I stood there—I whose sins had every day to be forgiven—and could not. It could not have been many seconds that he stood there, hand held out, but to me it seemed hours as I wrestled with the most difficult thing I had ever had to do.

For I had to do it—I knew that. And still I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion—I knew that too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. “Jesus, help me!” I prayed silently. “I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling.”



And so woodenly, mechanically, I thrust my hand into the one stretched out to me. And as I did, an incredible thing took place. The current started in my shoulder, raced down my arm, sprang into our joined hands. And then this healing warmth seemed to flood my whole being, bringing tears to my eyes.

“I forgive you, brother!” I cried. “With all my heart!”

For a long moment we grasped each other’s hands, the former guard and the former prisoner. I had never known God’s love so intensely as I did then.”

The Biblical Facets of Forgiveness

- ▶ The Biblical Principles of Forgiveness
- ▶ The Biblical Pattern of Forgiveness
- ▶ The Biblical Priority of Forgiveness
- ▶ The Biblical Paradigm of Forgiveness
- ▶ The Biblical Practice of Forgiveness
- ▶ The Biblical Power of Forgiveness

The Biblical Priority of Forgiveness

- ▶ Forgiveness is **not optional**
- ▶ The Lord's Prayer: **Matthew 6:12**: "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors."
- ▶ The only petition of the Lord's Prayer that Jesus discusses again:
- ▶ **Matthew 6:14-15**: "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

The Biblical Priority of Forgiveness

- ▶ **Borgman:** “Jesus is not talking about a matter of merit, but a matter of capacity. The forgiven forgive. Those who cherish what it means to be forgiven are forgiving. The minute I believe the gospel I become not only forgiven, I become a forgiver.”

The Biblical Priority of Forgiveness

- ▶ If you are an unforgiving person, then there are two possibilities:
 - ▶ You are an **unforgiven** person
 - ▶ You have **forgotten** your own forgiveness

The Biblical Priority of Forgiveness

- ▶ **Spurgeon:** “To be forgiven is such sweetness that honey is tasteless in comparison with it. But yet there is one thing sweeter still, and that is to forgive. As it is more blessed to give than to receive, so to forgive rises a stage higher in experience than to be forgiven.”

What about forgiveness of an unrepentant person?

- ▶ Do only as much as you can do
- ▶ **Romans 12:18**, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men."

What about forgiveness of an unrepentant person?

- ▶ Check your **heart**.
- ▶ **Psalm 86:5:** says, “For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive.”

What about forgiveness of an unrepentant person?

- ▶ Pray to forgive.
- ▶ We must distinguish between:
 - ▶ The **Prayer** of Forgiveness (forgiveness in our hearts before God), and
 - ▶ The **Transaction** of forgiveness (reconciliation)
 - ▶ **Luke 17:3:** "Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him."

What about forgiveness of an unrepentant person?

- ▶ The Prayer of Forgiveness:
- ▶ We should forgive them before God
 - ▶ **Mark 11:25** says: “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone.”
 - ▶ **Luke 23:34**: “Father forgive them for they know not what they do.”
 - ▶ **Acts 7:60**: “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!”

What about forgiveness of an unrepentant person?

- ▶ **Jay Adams:** “While forgiveness must not be granted to those who do not seek it repentantly, the one who ‘has something against anyone’ may not continue to hold it against him in his heart. Before God, in prayer, he is to forgive him (i.e. he must tell God that he will hold it against him no longer). He may not *brood* on it. But this forgiving in prayer (in his own heart before God) does not preclude his responsibility to pursue the matter with the offender. The one who has relieved his own mind and heart of the burden of the offense in prayer growing out of a truly forgiving attitude, will have little difficulty in *granting* forgiveness to his brother when it is sought. And, in the meantime, he will avoid the destructive results of resentment.”

What about forgiveness of an unrepentant person?

▶ Trust the **Judgment** of God

- ▶ **Romans 12:19:** “Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, “VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY,” says the Lord. “BUT IF YOUR ENEMY IS HUNGRY, FEED HIM, AND IF HE IS THIRSTY, GIVE HIM A DRINK.”
- ▶ Forgiveness is a matter of faith
- ▶ **Piper:** “If you hold a grudge, you doubt the judge.”

The Biblical Paradigm of Forgiveness

- ▶ God balances mercy with justice
- ▶ **Exodus 34:6-7:** “The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave *the guilty* unpunished.”

The Biblical Paradigm of Forgiveness

- ▶ **MacArthur:** “Too many people think of divine grace as a sort of benign forbearance, by which God simply excuses sin and looks the other way. Scripture teaches no such thing. So how does God reconcile sinners to Himself? On what grounds can He extend forgiveness to sinners? The answer is: God Himself has made His Son, Jesus Christ, the atonement for our sins. The truth is glorious: There is a way to satisfy His justice without damning the sinner. He can both fulfill His promise of vengeance against sin and reconcile—extend complete forgiveness to—sinners. And that is precisely what happened at the cross. This profound truth is the key to understanding divine forgiveness and God’s forgiveness is the pattern by which we are to forgive.”

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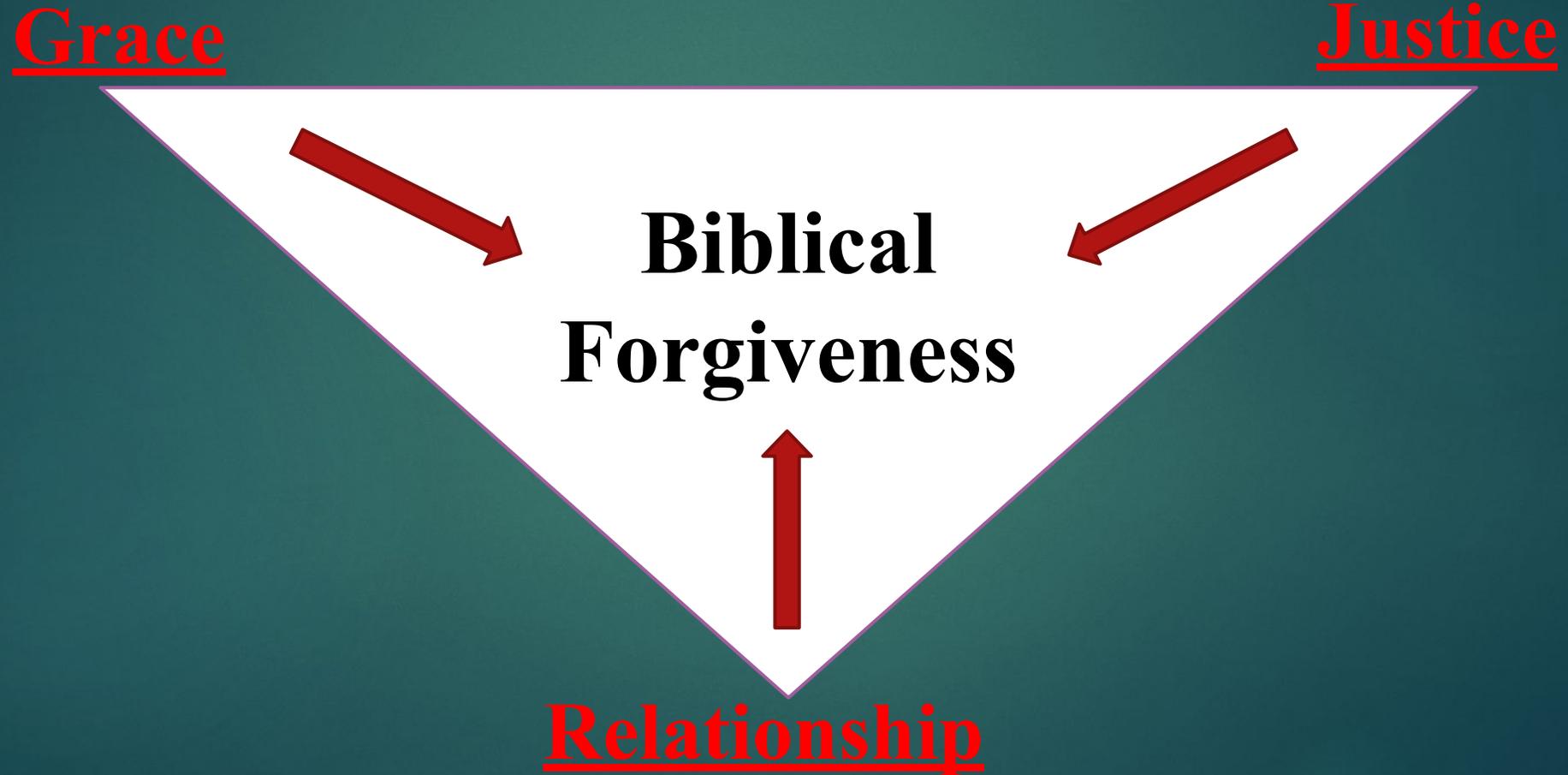
The Biblical Paradigm of Forgiveness

Grace

Justice

**Biblical
Forgiveness**

Relationship



The Biblical Paradigm of Forgiveness

- ▶ We honor justice by not letting sin go unaddressed.
- ▶ **Luke 17:3:** “If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.”
- ▶ Inner Forgiveness and Outward Correction

The Biblical Paradigm of Forgiveness

- ▶ **Keller says**, “In reality, inner forgiveness and outward correction work well together. Only if you have forgiven inside can you correct unabusively—without trying to make the person feel terrible. Only if you have forgiven already can your motive be to correct the person for God’s sake, for justice’s sake, for the community’s sake, and for the person’s sake. And only if you forgive on the inside will your words have any hope of changing the perpetrator’s heart. Otherwise your speech will be so filled with disdain and hostility that he or she will not listen to you. Ultimately, to forgive on the inside and to rebuke/correct on the outside are not incompatible, because they are both acts of love.”

The Biblical Paradigm of Forgiveness

- ▶ Forgiveness is for the ultimate purpose of **Relationship**
 - ▶ **Colossians 1:21-22**: ‘And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds, **22** yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death.’

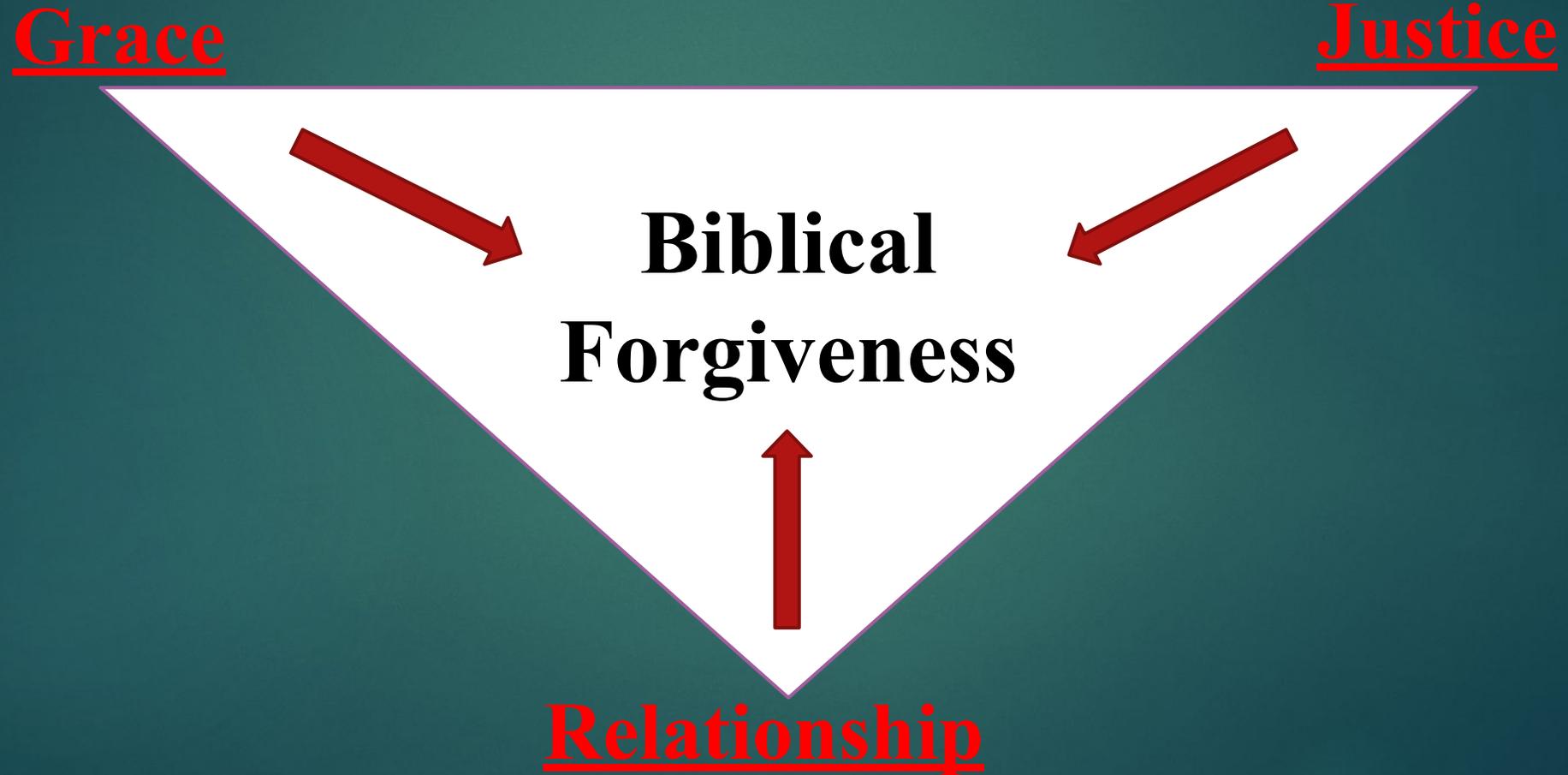
The Biblical Paradigm of Forgiveness

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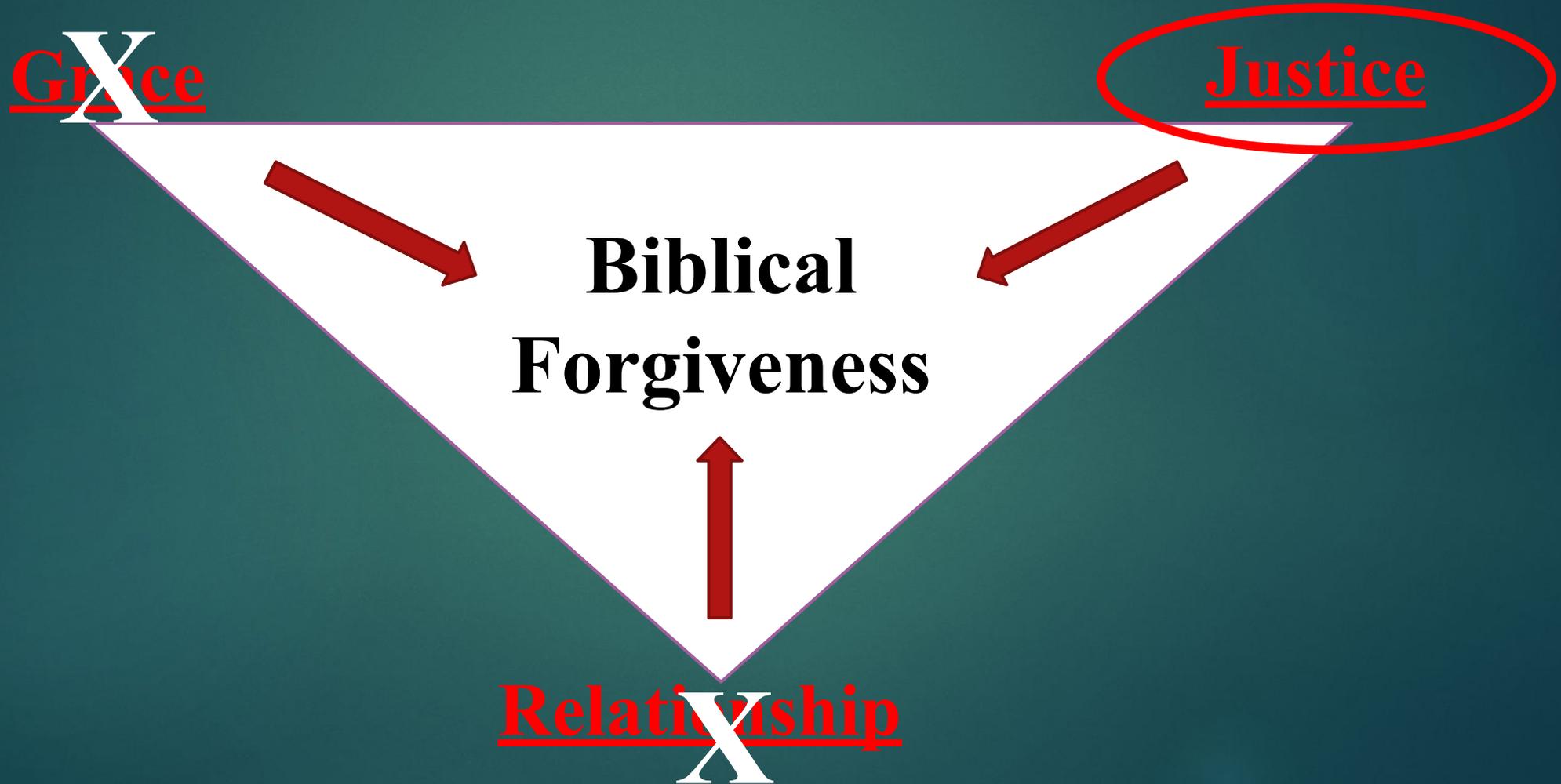
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**Biblical
Forgiveness**

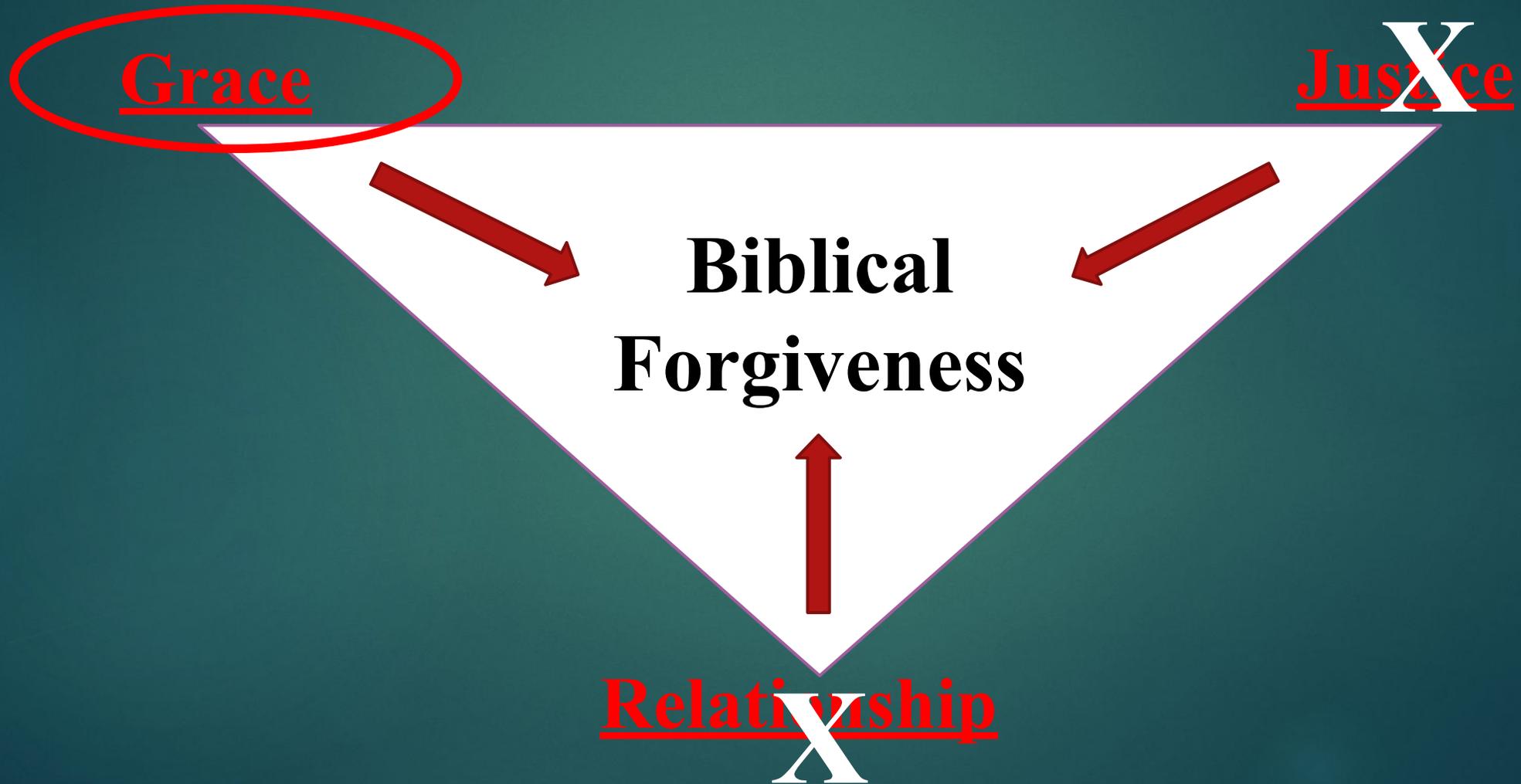
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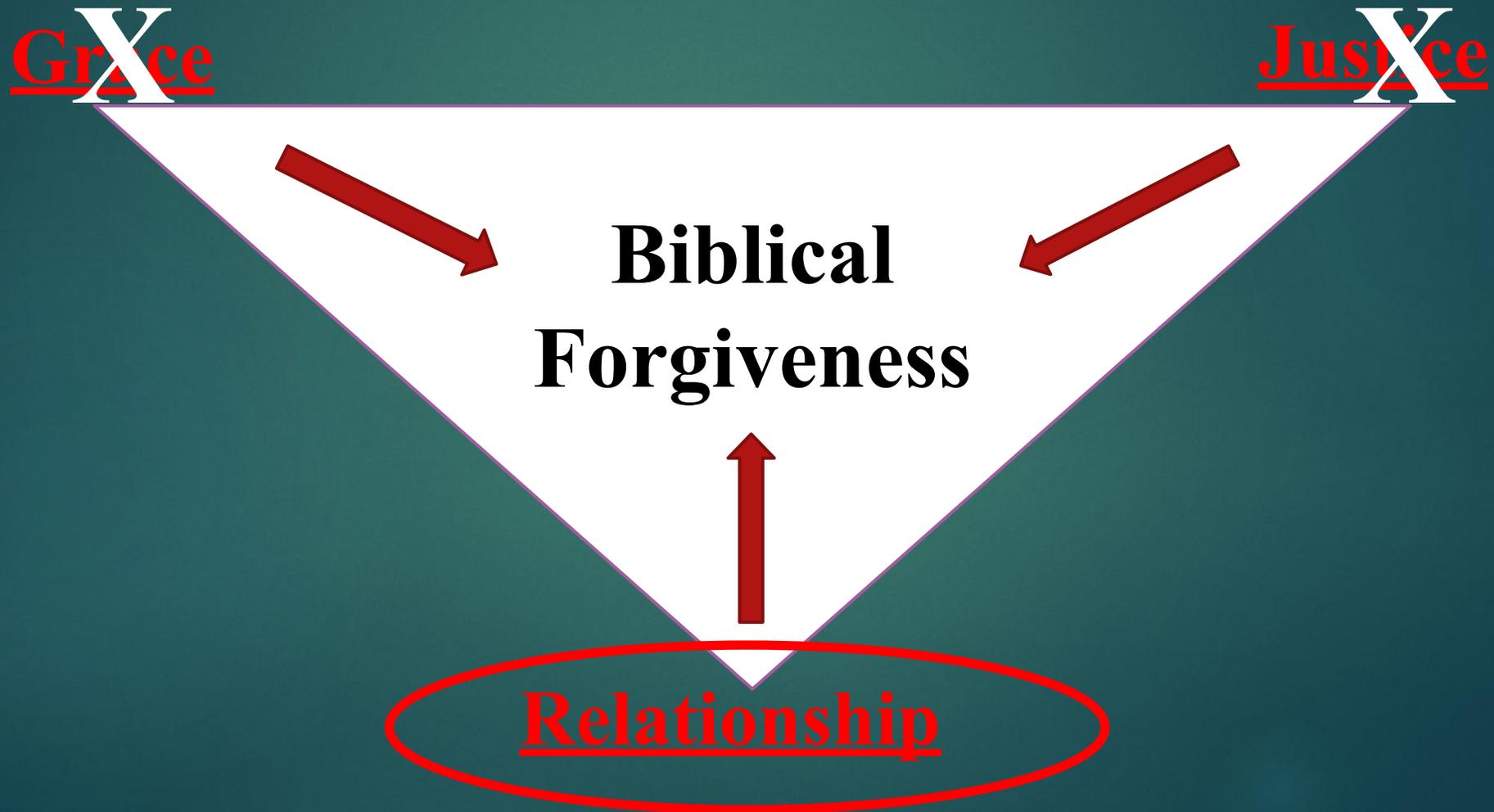
The Biblical Paradigm of Forgiveness



The Biblical Paradigm of Forgiveness



The Biblical Paradigm of Forgiveness



The Biblical Paradigm of Forgiveness

- ▶ **Adams says,** “We must not--as Christ certainly did not (otherwise why did He die)-accept the other person ‘as he is.’ To do so, to forget all about sin unatoned for and unconfessed (not properly dealt with) is not biblical. To accept a sinner *as he is*, means to say God was wrong in sending Christ to die for sinners *in order to change them*. God took sin so seriously that He punished His own Son with death for sin.”

The Biblical Paradigm of Forgiveness

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The Biblical Practice of Forgiveness

- ▶ We must balance mercy with justice
 - ▶ **1 Peter 4:8:** “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”
 - ▶ **Colossians 3:12** “So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other.”

The Biblical Practice of Forgiveness

▶ So when do we rebuke?

▶ When a sin is so serious it **threatens the relationship**. **Matthew 18:15** If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother

The Biblical Practice of Forgiveness

- ▶ When do we rebuke?
 - ▶ When a sin is so serious it threatens the relationship. **Matthew 18:15** tells us that the purpose of a rebuke is to “win your brother.”
 - ▶ When a sin develops into a **pattern of sin**. **Galatians 6:1**
“Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.”

The Biblical Practice of Forgiveness

- ▶ Practical tips:
- ▶ Confess your sins one to another (James 5:16)
- ▶ Do not make excuses for your behavior (Luke 14:18, Gen 3:12-13)
- ▶ Do not couch it in language which shows you're not sorry (Matthew 5:37)
- ▶ Do not destroy good words by bad attitudes (Proverbs 25:11)

The Biblical Practice of Forgiveness

Thomas Watson:

- ▶ Question: When do we forgive others?
- ▶ Answer: When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies mischief, but wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them.

“I can’t forgive myself”



“I can’t forgive myself”

- ▶ For the believer, it is a matter of **misdirected worship**

“I can’t forgive myself”

- ▶ For the unbeliever, it is a matter of **Self Image**
 - ▶ An unbeliever may feel he is too good
 - ▶ An unbeliever may feel he is too bad

The Biblical Power of Forgiveness

- ▶ **Spiritual Poverty:**
 - ▶ **Matthew 5:3:** ‘Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.’
 - ▶ **1 Timothy 1:15:** ‘Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all.’

The Biblical Power of Forgiveness

- ▶ Spiritual Wealth:
 - ▶ **Romans 10:12:** “for the same *Lord* is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him.”

