Forgiving One Another

Paul wrote, *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you"* (Ephesians 4:32). Before coming to power, Louis XII of France had been cast into prison. Later, when he did become king, he was urged to seek revenge on his enemies, but he refused. Instead, he prepared a scroll on which he listed all who had perpetrated crimes against him. Behind every man's name he placed a cross in red ink. When the guilty heard about this, they feared for their lives and fled. However, the king explained, "The cross which I drew beside each name was not a sign of punishment, but a pledge of forgiveness extended for the sake of the crucified Savior, who upon His cross forgave His enemies and prayed for them."

The Lord said, *"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him"* (Luke 17:3-4). The necessity of forgiveness is explained in Matthew 6:14-15: *"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."* We cannot count on the forgiveness of God if we cannot forgive the wrongs that are done to us. Joseph was a magnificent example of forgiveness. He said in Genesis 45:6, *"Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life."* The end goal of forgiveness and a right attitude toward others is being mature and complete like God (Matthew 5:48). We become like God by learning to forgive those who do not ask or do not deserve forgiveness.

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