

## Seeking a Clean Slate

One of God's great gifts to man is the renewal of time. Each moment each hour, each day and each year is, in essence, a new slice of time. J.R.R. Tolkien wrote, "All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us," (The fellowship of the Ring, pp. 48-51). One of our most challenging choices is to use some of that time forgiving others.

As we seek from God a *clean slate* for 2022, we must give the same to others. In Matthew 6:15, Jesus said, "But **if you do not forgive others**, then **your Father will not forgive your transgressions**," (NASB). To keep our focus on that task (and that *mandate*), let's consider a few steps that will help us create that reality.

### **One: Forgive like Jesus forgave.**

- Jesus forgives when we don't deserve it. We accept the free gift as He has commanded, but we don't *deserve* it.
- Jesus also forgave completely, without holding back.
- Jesus forgave from a motive of love, not merely because it was a good spiritual idea.
- Jesus also asked our heavenly Father to forgive. When our hearts and our motives are pure, we will seek to forgive in like manner.

### **Two: Forgive the ones that Jesus forgave.**

- Those who persecute you, Matthew 5:42-4
- Those who curse you and mistreat you, Luke 6:27, 28  
"Bless the who persecute you, bless and curse not,"  
Romans 12:14
- Recognize that the very *basis* of prayer for forgiveness is that we have already forgiven others.

We must remember that one of Satan's ploys is to tempt us to think that if the other person is not remorseful that we are excused from following God's word. Once we truly understand that the gift of forgiveness is more precious than perishable things like silver and gold, (1 Peter 1:18, 19) we will be drawn to forgiveness as our greatest treasure. Once we realize that, we will be inexorably drawn to forgive others. When all of this becomes realty in our daily lives we will be set free by following God's truth (John 8:32).

Forgive, be forgiven, and live freely in this new year that God has given us!

Ray Wallace