

The image features two hands, one above the other, cupped together in a gesture of offering or protection. The hands are positioned on the left side of the frame. The background is a sky with soft, colorful clouds in shades of blue, purple, and orange, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. Overlaid on the right side of the image is the text "The WORK of forgiveness" in a white, serif font. The word "WORK" is in all caps, while "The" and "of" are in title case, and "forgiveness" is in lowercase. The text has a slight shadow or glow effect, making it stand out against the background.

The WORK of forgiveness

God is merciful

The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate
and gracious God, slow to anger,
abounding in love and faithfulness,
maintaining love to thousands, and
forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin.

(Ex. 34:6)

The Lord was gracious to them
and had compassion and showed
concern for them because of his
covenant.. To this day he has
been unwilling to destroy them
or banish them from his presence.

(11 Kings 13:23)

But you are a forgiving God, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. Therefore; you did not desert them, even when they cast for themselves an image of a calf and said, “This is your God who brought you up out of Egypt” or when they committed awful blasphemies. (*Num. 9:17-18*)

I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I
have compassion (*Rom. 9:15*) i.e. “Don’t
tell me I should not have mercy on
someone! If I want to, I will!”

This leniency toward people is both our **standard** and our **challenge**.

This action of God toward humans **extends to** wickedness, rebellion, and sin.”

TENSION. God is predisposed toward mercy yet he is righteous, jealous, and holy.

The Lord is a jealous and avenging God. The Lord takes vengeance and is filled with wrath. The Lord takes vengeance on his foes and maintains wrath against his enemies. He is slow to anger and great in power but will not leave the guilty unpunished. (*Nahum 1:2-3*)

God's mercy never means apathy.

Unconditionally God promised the land to Abraham's descendants, yet possession of the land (later generations) was based on the **condition** of obedience to God's law.

Only in Jesus was this tension resolved.
His merit attained our mercy.

“I write this to you, dear children, because
your sins have been forgiven **on account
of his name.**”

(1 John 2:12)

Forgiveness (of fellowman) is REQUIRED
by God.

We **receive** as we have **given**.

Colossians 3:13

Bear with each other [**patience**] and forgive whatever grievances you have against one another [**forgetfulness**]. Forgive as the Lord forgave you [**gratitude**].

Matthew 18:35

This is how the Heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart [**sincerity**].

- Forgiveness does not require a formal ceremony!
- Forgiveness may not ever be asked for, acknowledged, or appreciated!
- Humanly, when you forgive you are releasing **yourself**!

Forgiveness does not require future
trust or **friendship**.

The human goals of forgiveness may
not always be obtained.

- ✓ release (emotions)
- ✓ removal (guilt/penalty)
- ✓ restoration (relationship)

The **spiritual** goals of forgiveness can
always be attained.

- ✓ handing the matter over to God!
- ✓ removing any obstacle to God's
forgiveness of myself!

Do not repay evil for evil... If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written "Vengeance is mine, I will repay." says the Lord. (*Romans 12:17-19*)