Top 5 mistakes with forgiveness and apologies

7) Wasting time on “forgiving yourself”

No such thing in the Bible. The only forgiveness that ultimately matters is the forgiveness of God (Rom. 5:1).

6) Making things worse

If you had a hateful thought about someone don’t go to them. You did not sin against them. You sinned against God!

5) Wait until the offended person comes to you

Matt. 5:22ff. If you know that someone has been offended, go to them.

4) Seeking forgiveness for non-sins

Seek forgiveness for a sin.

Apologize for other matters and mistakes.

3) The blanket approach

“Whatever I have ever done please forgive me”

The transactional nature of forgiveness demands specificity.

Humility and true repentance exhibits thoroughness and clarity (2 Cor. 7:8-14).

2) The difference between a heart of forgiveness and relational forgiveness

Recognize that relational requires two people to have a heart of forgiveness.

Col. 3:13 We are to forgive others as Christ Jesus forgave us. The Lord has forgiven us (John 19:30) when He paid the cost. But the relationship wasn’t reconciled until we repented of our sins and trusted in His provision. Similarly, believers must have a spirit of forgiveness (Matt. 18:21-35) and yet cannot transact relational forgiveness unless both parties are willing to humble their hearts and return to unity (Eph. 4:3).

1) The BIG “if”

A believer should never say “If I offended you…”

This really says “If you are so sensitive and pathetic that you were hurt by what I did/said I apologize that you are so weak.” This is a non-apology and almost the opposite of seeking forgiveness.