

Forgive others so that God may forgive you. - Reconcile with your adversaries. - The sacrifice God likes best. - Mote and beam in eye. - Abstain from judging others if you want not being judged in return. Let the sinless cast the first stone. - **Instructions from the spirits:** Offense forgiveness. - Indulgence. - Are we allowed to rebuke others? Are we permitted to notice or evince our neighbor's evil?

Forgive others so that God may forgive you

1. *Blessed are the merciful, for they will obtain mercy.* (Matthew 5:7.)
2. *If you forgive your neighbors their trespasses, God will also forgive you. But if you don't forgive neighbors their trespasses, neither will God forgive you.* (Matthew 6:14 and 15.)
3. *If your neighbor trespasses against you, go and tell them their fault between you and them alone. If your neighbor hears you, then you will gain them. Then Peter came to him and said: Lord, how often shall my neighbor sin against me and I forgive them? Till seven times? Jesus answered: I say not until seven times, but until seventy times seven.* (Matthew 18:15, 21 and 22.)

4. Mildness is completed by mercy. It forgets and forgives all offenses. The merciless

cannot be mild and pacific. Pardon ability distinguishes the elevated souls. They keep serenity even when undergo the hardest ordeal. Hatred and rancor evince lack of spiritual greatness. The pitiless are anxious, gloomy susceptible and bitter. The merciful are calm, wise and charitable.

Woe to those who swear they will never forgive! If humankind don't condemn them, God will. People who deny forgiveness to others lack right to claim pardon for their own faults. By saying that we must forgive our neighbors seventy times seven times, Jesus teaches mercy must be limitless.

Nevertheless, we need to distinguish the true forgiveness from the false one. The former is noble, great, truly generous, without any hidden thought. It softly avoids hurting the adversary's feelings, even when there's no justification for their errors. The latter occurs when the plaintiff imposes humiliating and expensive conditions to the offender, causing additional anger instead of calm; when the complainer, bragging a faked generosity, offers hands to the adversary with ostentation rather than goodness. In such circumstance a sincere reconciliation is impossible. There is not any goodness in this case; only pride satisfaction. In every dispute, the person who shows disinterest, peaceful trend, charity and soul greatness attracts the unbiased people's sympathy.

Reconcile with your adversaries

5. Reconcile with your adversary quickly, while you are in the way with them; lest at any time your adversary delivers you to the judge, the judge delivers you to the officer, and the officer casts you into prison. Verily I say to you, you shall by no means come out from prison till you have paid the uttermost cent. (Matthew 5:25 and 26.)

6. Besides its moral effects, forgiveness, as good in general, brings practical benefits. Physical death does not free us from our enemies. In the afterlife, vengeful spirits rancorously persecute those they hate. The proverb “Dead snake dead poison” doesn't apply to humans, because the vindictive spirits keep tormenting their incarnated enemies. They harm their foes' dearest affections and interests. Obsession cases, especially the serious ones, such as subjugation and possession, normally relate to spiritual chase. The obsessed or possessed person is often a revenge prey. The vengeance reason lies in the persecuted person's actions, of present-day life or from past incarnations. God allows such persecutions in order to correct both lacking forgiveness and the committed evil. So we should, as soon as possible, before decease unexpectedly takes us,

amend all the offenses we might have caused. We should also quickly forgive all our opponents. This attitude can cease dissension, eliminate further hatred and, perhaps, turn a terrible enemy into a future friend. One who proceeds this way places himself, even alone, on the correct side of divine law. God protects the pardoner from revenge. Reconciliation pacifies present fights and prevents their revival. This is why Christ recommends us to immediately reconcile with our adversaries. By saying nobody leaves prison until their debt has been fully paid, Jesus teaches we will only be liberated from God's court after having completely satisfied the divine justice.

The sacrifice God likes best

7. When bringing your gift to the altar, if you remember there that your neighbor has ought against you, leave your gift there, next to the altar, go your way and first reconcile with your neighbor; and then come back to the altar and offer your gift. (Matthew 5:23 and 24.)

8. With these words, Jesus teaches the greatest gift we can offer to God is the sacrifice of our resentment. So, before asking for the divine pardon, we must forgive our debtors and amend all the damages we might have caused. Only then our offering will please the

Omnipotent, because it will depart from rancor-free hearts. In reality, God doesn't demand us any offering. Jesus explains this lesson by mentioning material offerings because he adapted his words to the ancient custom of sacrificing in the temple. What we are actually expected to sacrifice is our hate, animosity, pride, selfishness and evil thoughts. This is the sacrifice God appreciates. Such endeavor delivers our prayers to the Creator. Jesus means this, by saying that if we want please God we must reconcile with our neighbors before going to the altar.

Mote and beam in eye

9. Why do you see a mote in your neighbor's eye but disregard the beam that is in your own eye? How do you say to your neighbor: Let me pull a mote out of your eye, while having a beam in your own eye? First cast the beam out of your eye; then you will be able to clearly see and cast a mote out of your neighbor's eye. (Matthew 7:3-5.)

10. One of our human follies is noticing our neighbor's evil before admitting ours. In order to properly self-judge, we should watch ourselves from an external point of view, as through a mirror, and self-ask what we would think if we saw someone else doing what we do.

Pride induces us to disguise our moral defects. Such behavior counteracts charity. Proudful charity is a contradiction, because haughtiness neutralizes benevolence. Self-denial and arrogance don't match. The proud believe that they can be raised by spotlighting the defects of others, and that they can be eclipsed by exalting the virtues of their neighbors. Thus, they are much more likely to defame their siblings than praising them. Pride breeds vice and inhibits virtue. Jesus fought pride because it is a serious hurdle to the human advance.

**Abstain from judging others if you want not
being judged in return.**

Let the sinless cast the first stone

11. Judge not, so that you be not judged. For with the judgment you judge, you shall be judged. And the measure you mete, it will be measured to you again. (Matthew 7:1 and 2.)

12. The scribes and Pharisees brought to Jesus a woman taken in adultery. They placed her in the midst and said to him: Master, this woman has just been taken in adultery. In the law, Moses commands us to stone her. What do you say? They said this tempting him, aiming to accuse him. But Jesus, bowing himself down, wrote with his finger on the ground. As they continued asking him, he lifted himself up and

said to them: The sinless one among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. And they, which heard it, went out, one by one, beginning by the eldest up to the last. Jesus was left alone, and the woman kept standing in the midst.

*Then Jesus, lifting himself up, said to her: Woman, where are those that accused you? Has no man condemned you? She said: No one, Lord. And Jesus said: Neither do I condemn you. Now go your way and sin no more. (John 8:3-11.)*¹

13. By saying “Let the sinless among you cast the first stone”, Jesus makes indulgence the main duty, because everyone needs it. He also teaches we must not judge others more severely than we want being judged, nor condemn in others that which we forgive in ourselves. Before blaming someone for a fault, first we must ponder if the same reproach applies to ourselves.

Censure may be launched against someone for two purposes: to disgrace the person or to repress evil. Nothing justifies the former, which only comprises malice and slander. The latter may be praiseworthy and sometimes even a duty, because it is necessary to restrain evil in society. We must help each

other's advance. Hence, we should avoid to literally understand the principle “Abstain from judging others if you don't want being judged in return” because “the letter kills but the spirit gives life.”²

Jesus allows the fight against evil. He himself often fought badness, sometimes in a strong fashion. However, he stresses that authority to accuse is proportional to accuser's moral stature. Criticizers who commit the same fault they condemn lack moral authority to reproach others. In addition, people deny voluntary respect and submission to those who, having been granted some kind of power, violate laws, rules or principles they are supposed to protect. *There is only one kind of legitimate authority: that which is built upon the good example. This is the only sort of authority God acknowledges.* Those Christ's words reinforce this principle.

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE SPIRITS

Offense forgiveness

14. How often must we forgive our neighbors? Seven times? No. Seventy times seven! Here we have one Christian teaching that should lively strike intelligence and hearts. The
2 2 Corinthians 3:6.

¹ Quotes accord with the primitive Bible text (*Vulgata Latina*) – Versionist's note.

divine prayer Jesus teaches, so profound and concise, stresses the same idea. Christ, the outstanding fair one, taught Peter: you shall forgive endlessly; you shall pardon each new offense over seven times seven times; you shall teach your neighbor the self-forgetfulness that strengthens one against attack, misbehavior and insult; you shall be mild and humble without measuring your gentleness; in short, you shall do to others all you wish the Celestial Clemency doing to you. God is always forgiving you and tolerating your shortcomings. Nevertheless, the Creator has never reckoned the pardon you have been repeatedly granted!

So, practice the teaching Jesus gave to Peter. Forgive! Be tolerant, charitable, generous and even lavish of your love. Give and God will reward you. Pardon your neighbors and God will forgive you. Lower yourselves and God will raise you up. Humble yourselves and you will be taken to sit on God's right hand side.

Dear beloved children: spread this lesson. It comes from Christ, who, from the celestial splendor heights, always watches over you. Lovingly continue the hard task Jesus began. Forgive your fellow humans, for you need their forgiveness too. If they have deeply harmed you, then there is one more reason for you to be tolerant, because the sorer is the offense, the greater is the forgiver's worth. One who is able to pardon only a few scratches will

be assigned little merit.

Spiritists! Forgiveness must be, both by words and actions, a meaningful routine. If you call yourselves Spiritists, then be so. Forget all evil that has been done to you. Think only of the good you receive and can do. Follow this path without straying from it, not even by thought, because each one is responsible for their own ideas, which are very well known by God. Remove rancor from your hearts. You will be unable to hide it from the Almighty, who knows everything. *So, happy are those who go sleep saying: I have no complaint against my neighbors.* - Simeon. (Bordeaux, 1862.)³

15. The one who forgives a mate give them a friendship proof. Those that condone an offense show themselves better than they were. People who forgive enemies attract pardon to themselves. Thus, my friends, forgive others so that God may forgive you. If you are hardhearted, demanding, inflexible; if you are severe even about a tiny offense: how can you expect the Highest Judge to be kindly and merciful regarding your own faults? Oh! They who utter “I will never forgive” pronounce their own damnation! Moreover, if you calmly

3 An analogy helps understanding the evil that one attracts when one shelters bad feelings. Let us suppose a person decides retaining trash inside their wardrobes and drawers. As consequence, pest and rot will spread through their dwelling. How sound will their home become? Hatred and resentment are spiritual garbage. Let us now imagine someone decides keeping such spiritual rubbish inside their heart. How sane will their mind and body be? - Versionist's note.

bethink, you may figure out the aggressor is often yourself. Your harsh words, or your stress, might have started that argument which began with a pinprick and ended in a rupture. You complain that your adversary misbehaves for having been so susceptible. But this is yet another reason for you to be merciful: if you remain intolerant, you will deserve the same reproach you cast upon your opponent. Even though someone actually harmed you, you have perhaps worsened the dispute through your reprisal. Your unwise behavior might have turned a forgettable matter into a serious fray. If you could have prevented a quarrel, but did nothing to cease it, then you are truly guilty. In the other hand, the person that, although fully right, remains merciful is yet more meritorious.

The true forgiveness comes from heart; the false, from lips. Many people say “I forgive my offender.” However, they inwardly rejoice when evil blows their adversaries and still comment “They suffer what they deserve.” Others say “I forgive you” but append “I will never reconcile with you” or “I don't want to see you again.” Is this the forgiveness Gospel teaches? Surely not! The true Christian pardon casts a thick veil over the past. God, who sees beyond appearance, considers only the true forgiveness. Pretense will never deceive our Creator, who knows the innermost corners of our minds and hearts. Forgiveness is peculiar to

the great humans, while rancor marks the reckless. So, remember: true pardon is recognizable more by acts than by words. - *Paul*, the apostle. (Lyon, 1861.)

Indulgence

16. Spiritists, today we will discuss indulgence, the outstanding virtue everyone should use but so few perform. Indulgent people seldom see a neighbor's error. When noticing someone's fault, they avoid spreading it. Moreover: they try keeping it secret. While the malicious wickedly evince a wrongdoing by, for instance, spreading a faked and sometimes bizarre excuse to it, the indulgent show a serious and plausible explanation about the failing.

The indulgent never busy themselves with others' evil, unless to offer help. In this case, they take care to lessen the fault. They never make shocking comments nor censure. They provide only advice, usually in a veiled manner. Let us reflect. What is the real purpose of your criticism? To highlight you are innocent of that reproach? To remark you are worthier than the accused one? Oh children! You must judge your own hearts, thoughts and actions, without watching your neighbors' behavior! Keep stern eyes only against yourselves!

Be severe to yourselves and indulgent to

others. The Highest Judge, who sees each heart's intimacy and knows every action motive, often forgives an act you reprobate, and dooms other you approve. People who energetically demand condemnation for their neighbors are perhaps committing a worse crime.

Therefore, my friends, always use indulgence. This virtue uplifts, attracts and calms, while intolerance desponds, repels and angers. - *Joseph*, a protective spirit. (Bordeaux, 1863.)

17. Be indulgent regarding all your neighbors' faults. Don't harshly measure any action but your own. God will be indulgent to you according to the mercy you dedicate to your neighbors.

Uphold the strong: encourage them to persist. Strengthen the weak: show them the goodness of the Highest, who considers even the smallest repentance. Remark the excellence of mutual charity, that covers the multitude of sins. Understand the infinite mercy of the Almighty, who grants us countless restart opportunities. Remember to pray, more through acts than by thoughts, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" and realize the superlative teaching these words enclose.

What do you ask while you are begging pardon to God? Your history erasure? Such deletion, if granted, would nullify both your

faults and merits. In this case, you would deserve no punishment and no reward. No! Your past cannot be canceled! However, you can at present, during each new day, write down your future history. When you beg forgiveness to God, you are asking strength to overcome temptation; you are demanding fortitude to take the love and submission road, along which you will become able to unite repentance and amends.

One who actually forgives a sibling goes further than just covering their failings with an oblivion veil, for this cloth is often transparent for human eyes. When forgiving a neighbor, we should also give them love, the force which drives the universe. Do for all your fellow humans what you would like God doing for you. Replace defiling anger by purifying love. Preach, through your example, the active and ceaseless charity Jesus teaches. Preach as he did while he remained visible on Earth, and as he does in the spiritual world. Follow his divine example! Walk on his footprints, for they will guide you to the after-fight happiness. Carry your cross as he did, painfully but courageously. Go up to your own Calvary, peak upon which you will meet peace. - *John*, bishop of Bordeaux. (1862.)

18. Dear friends: be severe with yourselves and indulgent with others. This virtuous rule, that so few follow, is also charity!

All humans have bad tendencies and evil habits to discard. In order to reach the progress mountain summit, all of us have a lighter or heavier burden of vice to get rid of. You are very clairvoyant regarding your neighbors' faults but blind about yours. Why? You see the small mote which troubles your fellow's eye but you neglect that in our own eye there is a beam, which blinds you and takes you from one fall to another! When will you improve your attitude? Believe what your spiritual friends tell you! Those who are proud enough to think they are more righteous and praiseworthy than their siblings are both foolish and guilty. God will open their eyes on the judgment day. Charity is always modest and humble. It disregards defects of others. Rather, it strives to evince their virtues. Although human heart sometimes looks like a corruption abyss, it has also hidden in its innermost folds the noble feeling embryo, the spiritual essence living spark.

Spiritism! Blessed and consoling doctrine! Happy are those who know it and take advantage of the godly spirits' teachings! Their pathway is lit by the following guidance: practical charity, hearty charity, charity to neighbor and to oneself. In short, charity to every living creature and, above all, trust in God, who made love and charity a universal law. Love to our Creator summarizes all the human duties, but without charity it is

impossible to really love God. - *Dufêtre*, bishop of Nevers. (Bordeaux.)

Are we allowed to rebuke others? Are we permitted to notice or evince our neighbor's evil?

19. *As everyone is fallible, are we forbidden to reprimand others?*

No. We must work for the evolution of our neighbors, specially of those under our responsibility. But we should reprehend one moderately, carefully, preferably in secrecy and always aiming at a useful purpose. In this case, we fulfill a charity duty. We must never censure someone aiming just to expose or vilify them. This is wickedness. Moreover, criticism requires moral authority: before rebuking anyone else, first we must be sure we are really free from that evil we condemn. - *Saint Louis*. (Paris, 1860.)

20. *Are we allowed to notice imperfection of others, even confidentially?*

Everything depends on intention. We are not forbidden to notice evil where it exists. It is even improper seeing only good everywhere, for such illusion would hinder progress. But discrediting a faulty neighbor requires a very serious justification. Those who enjoy humiliating a neighbor are completely wrong,

even if the faulty person has been caught red-handed. The opposite occurs when the observer studies the case, takes moral lessons from it and keeps evil in secrecy. Such practice is beneficial to prevent error repetition. Will humans defeat evil by ignoring it? - *Saint Louis*. (Paris, 1860.)

21. *Are there cases in which we are allowed to disclose evil of others?*

This is a delicate question. In order to answer it, we need using well-understood charity. If one's imperfection harms only themselves, then evil disclosure is useless. However, when the evil is likely to harm others, we should prioritize the majority's interest. Sometimes unmasking hypocrisy may even be a duty, because it is preferable one person to fall down than many people becoming their victims. In this case, we must ponder pros and cons. - *Saint Louis*. (Paris, 1860.)