

# What God Doesn't Know Can't Hurt You

Or

## God, the Forgiving God

By Bill Scheidler

### Introduction: The Omniscience of God

God has what we can call “essential attributes.” These are the qualities that God possesses that no other being in the universe (whether angels, devils or mankind) possess. These are the things that make Him God. They include:

### God's Essential Attributes

1. **God is Eternal** (Ps. 90:2). That is, He has no beginning and no end.
2. **God is Immutable** (Mal. 3:6). That is, He never changes
3. **God is Independent** (Is. 40:12-31). That is, He is totally self-sufficient.
4. **God is Omnipotent** (Jer. 32:17-27). That is, He has power over everything.
5. **God is Omniscient** (Ps. 139:1-4). That is, He knows everything, past, present and future.
6. **God is Omniscient** (Rom. 11:33). That is, He is the source of all wisdom.
7. **God is Omnipresent** (Ps. 139:7-10). That is, He is everywhere in the universe at all times.

As you can see, God is like no other being. Yet, it has its down sides too!

- He doesn't have birthday parties (He is eternal, ageless, no birth).
- He can't have surprise parties (Because He cannot be surprised).
- He can't grow or change (Because He can't get any better).
- He has a learning disability (He can't learn because He already knows everything)
- He can't go anywhere (Because He is already there)
- He can't be informed.
- There is no such thing as news.
- He doesn't get into jokes (He already knows the punch line).

### God is Omniscient, He knows everything.

The Bible teaches that God knows everything. It teaches that:

- He sees all that occurs in every place and keeps watch upon the evil and the good (Pro. 15:3).
- He knows everything that occurs in nature (Ps. 147:4; Matt. 10:29; Matt. 6:8).
- He knows the ways of man (Ps. 33:13-15; Pro. 5:21).
- He knows all of the deeds and experiences of man (Ps. 139:2-3).
- He knows all of man's words (Ps. 139:4).
- He knows all of man's sorrows (Ex. 3:7).

- He knows our thoughts (Ps. 139:1-2).
- He knows for all eternity what will be for all eternity (Acts 15:18).

***“Known to God from eternity are all His works.”***

### **What God Does Not Know**

Today I would like to focus on **what God does not know**. To do this I would like to look at a part of God’s nature and one of His titles that can bring real strength and freedom to us today.

I would like to have us read some verses together:

#### **Exodus 34:6-7**

*“And the Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and **abounding in goodness** and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, **forgiving iniquity** and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation.”*

#### **Nehemiah 9:17**

*“They refused to obey, and they were not mindful of Your wonders that You did among them. But they hardened their necks, and in their rebellion they appointed a leader to return to their bondage. But you God are **ready to pardon**, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in kindness, and did not forsake them.”*

#### **Psalms 32:1-5**

*“Blessed is he whose transgression is **forgiven**, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.”*

#### **Psalms 86:1-5, 15**

*“Bow down Your ear, O LORD, hear me; for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am holy; You are my God; Save Your servant who trusts in You! Be merciful to me, O Lord, for I cry to You all day long. Rejoice the soul of Your servant, For to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul. For You, Lord, are good, and **ready to forgive**, and **abundant in mercy** to all those who call upon You.”*

#### **Verse 15**

*“But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering and **abundant in mercy** and truth.”*

### **Psalm 103:1-18**

*“Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who **forgives all your iniquities**, who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and **abounding in mercy**. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; **As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us**. As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children's children, To such as keep His covenant, And to those who remember His commandments to do them.*”

### **Psalm 130**

*“Out of the depths I have cried to You, O LORD; Lord, hear my voice! Let Your ears be attentive To the voice of my supplications. If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But **there is forgiveness with You**, that You may be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope. My soul waits for the Lord More than those who watch for the morning--Yes, more than those who watch for the morning. O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is mercy, And with Him is **abundant redemption**. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.”*

### **Isaiah 55:7**

*“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; Let him return to the LORD, And He will have mercy on him; And to our God, For He will **abundantly pardon**.”*

### **Micah 7:18-20**

*“Who is a God like You, **Pardoning iniquity** and passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, because **He delights in mercy**. He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob And mercy to Abraham, Which You have sworn to our fathers from days of old.”*

### **Matthew 9:1-8**

*“So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.” And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, “This Man blasphemes!” But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk’? **But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins**”--then He said to the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.”*

### **Acts 13:38-39**

*“Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through this Man is preached to you the **forgiveness of sins**; and by Him everyone who believes is justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.”*

### **Ephesians 1:3-8**

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him **we have** redemption through His blood, **the forgiveness of sins**, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence.”*

### **Colossians 2:13-15**

*“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having **forgiven you all trespasses**, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.”*

### **God is a Forgiving God**

God is a forgiving God. He is a God of love, mercy and compassion Who is eager and even anxious to forgive His people.

So much did God want to convince us of this that He sent Jesus to preach remission of sins. Jesus likewise sent the Apostles to tell men that their sins could be forgiven.

The good news of the Gospel is not that “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Man’s conscience bears witness to that. The good news is that there is **forgiveness of sins**.

## **The Nature of God's Forgiveness**

God has a unique ability. With all of His essential attributes, He is able to actually purposefully forget.

### **Forgiveness Defined**

The word "forgive" means "to cancel or pardon."

To forgive is to absolve from liability to punishment for a crime or fault committed.

It is the voluntary release of a person over which one has legal control.

When God forgives it does not mean that He temporarily suspends punishment which He may at some later time inflict.

### **When God forgives our sins, He—**

- Remembers our sins no more (Jer. 31:34).
- Removes our sins as far from Him as the east is from the west (Ps. 103:12).
- Casts our sins into the sea of His forgetfulness, never to be remembered again.

*God's forgiveness is complete and eternal.*

### **The Presidential Pardon**

God's forgiveness is very much like the presidential pardon. There are five characteristics of a presidential pardon:

1. It must be exercised by one who has the power to forgive.
2. No other judge or magistrate can overturn the sentence.
3. The crime is completely erased from all records.
4. You can never be tried for it again.
5. It can never be held against you again.

In other words, it is just as if the crime never occurred. Even on a job application that asks for whether or not you have ever been convicted of a crime, you can legally say "NO!"

### **The Conditions for Forgiveness**

God is poised to forgive. But we must trigger that forgiveness by certain things. The six conditions for forgiveness include the following:

#### **1. We must call upon the Lord.**

*"The Lord is abundant in mercy to all who call upon Him" (Ps. 86:5).*

- Because only God can ultimately forgive sin.
- Because God is ultimately the offended party. All sin is first and foremost a sin against God (“*Against you and you only have I sinned*” Psalm 51:4). Forgiveness depends on him who is offended.

## **2. We must confess our sin.**

*“If we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”* (I John 1:9).

No one can be pardoned unless there is an admission that a crime has been committed. President Reagan was asked if he would be extending a pardon to Oliver North prior to his leaving office. Reagan replied, “There has been no verdict that a crime has been committed.”

You must admit to a crime before pardon can be given.

## **3. We must repent of our sin (Acts 8:22).**

This means that you have a change of heart and mind and to have a godly sorrow for sin. We must see the damnable nature of what we have done.

## **4. We must be willing to forsake our sin.**

*“Whosoever confesses and forsakes his sins will have mercy”* (Pro. 28:13).

God’s forgiveness is not a license to sin. We cannot presume upon God’s mercy. It is not like the confession booth (live it up on Saturday night).

## **5. We must be willing to forgive others (Matt. 5:23-24; 6:12-15; Mk. 11:25; Lk. 6:37; Col. 1:14; 3:13).**

*“To the merciful, I will show myself merciful”* (Psalm 18:25).

## **6. We must accept the pardon.**

God is gracious, but He will not force the acceptance of His grace upon man.

### III. George Wilson

In 1829 George Wilson of Pennsylvania was sentenced to be hanged for robbing the mail and murder. President Andrew Jackson pardoned him but Wilson refused the pardon. Wilson indicated that the pardon was not valid unless it was accepted. The Supreme Court was called upon to decide the matter. Chief Justice John Marshall gave the following decision:

*“A pardon is a piece of paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance by the person implicated. It is hardly supposed that one under sentence of death would refuse to accept a pardon, but if it is refused, it is no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged!”*

Accepting our forgiveness has to do with forgiving ourselves. Forgiveness is completed by our acceptance. If we do not accept we stay in our prison house.

## **IF TIME PERMITS PROCEED**

### **The Results of Forgiveness**

When forgiveness is effected it brings forth some wonderful results. These results include:

1. Justification—We are justified before God.
2. Clearing of the Conscience—Inner Healing
3. Joy (Ps. 51:12)—The joy of our salvation returns.
4. Restoration—Our relationship with God is restored back to where it was prior to the offense.

There is no sin so gross nor so often repeated that it cannot be forgiven. 70X7 reflects the heart of God when it comes to forgiveness. This includes:

ABORTION DIVORCE HOMOSEXUALITY CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

PORNOGRAPHY ADULTRY FORNICATION STEALING CHILD ABUSE

FAILURE IN BUSINESS, RAISING CHILDREN, MINISTRY

*“Such were some of you”* (I Cor. 6:9-11).

*“Those who have been forgiven much, love much”* (Luke 7:47).

### **The Response to God’s Forgiveness**

1. **Love** (Lk. 7:47)
2. **A New Walk** (John 5:14, “Go and sin no more)
3. **A Willingness to Forgive Others**

**Pray for people still in prison. Walk them through the conditions of forgiveness. Announce freedom and pardon to them.**