

# DISCOVERING THE BIBLE

## LESSON 13 THE IMPORTANCE OF FORGIVENESS

*“But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body”*

*Philippians 3:20,21*

1. Our citizenship is in heaven
2. We are transformed
3. He brings everything under his control
4. Does this suggest that we ought to behave now in a heavenly manner?

*“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”*

*Romans 12:17-21*

1. Evil is to be avoided, peace is to be sought—if it is possible
2. God is to deal with problems
3. Problems can be dealt with by showing a loving nature
4. How could you pour ‘coals of love’ on an ‘enemies’ head?

*“Because their sister Dinah had been defiled, Jacob's sons replied deceitfully as they spoke to Shechem and his father Hamor. They said to them, "We can't do such a thing; we can't give our sister to a man who is not circumcised. That*

*would be a disgrace to us. We will give our consent to you on one condition only: that you become like us by circumcising all your males. Then we will give you our daughters and take your daughters for ourselves. We'll settle among you and become one people with you. But if you will not agree to be circumcised, we'll take our sister and go." .... All the men who went out of the city gate agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem, and every male in the city was circumcised. Three days later, while all of them were still in pain, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and attacked the unsuspecting city, killing every male.*

*Genesis 34:13-17,24,25*

1. Dinah had been raped, Jacob's sons set out to deal with the offence.
2. The method described here deals with the sin—but is a deceitful approach
3. All the men of the city die. Is this a just method?
4. Would forgiveness offer a better approach?

*"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."*

*John 13:34,35*

1. Jesus commands the kind of relationships that He wishes to see in the church
2. The aim is that people see we are disciples of Jesus
3. How could we show love to each other?
4. Would this be hard to sustain? What would make this hard?

*"Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart."*

*Hebrews 12:2,3*

1. If we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus rather than on ourselves we will not grow weary as Christians
2. How could we do this?

*"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."*

*Matthew 18:15-17*

1. Things do go wrong
2. This shows how to resolve problems when things go wrong
  1. Try to speak to the person directly
  2. Try harder if this fails, try and take others with you
  3. If that does not work the church should be involved
  4. If there still can be no resolution then the person should be treated as a tax collector
  5. How did Jesus treat tax collectors?