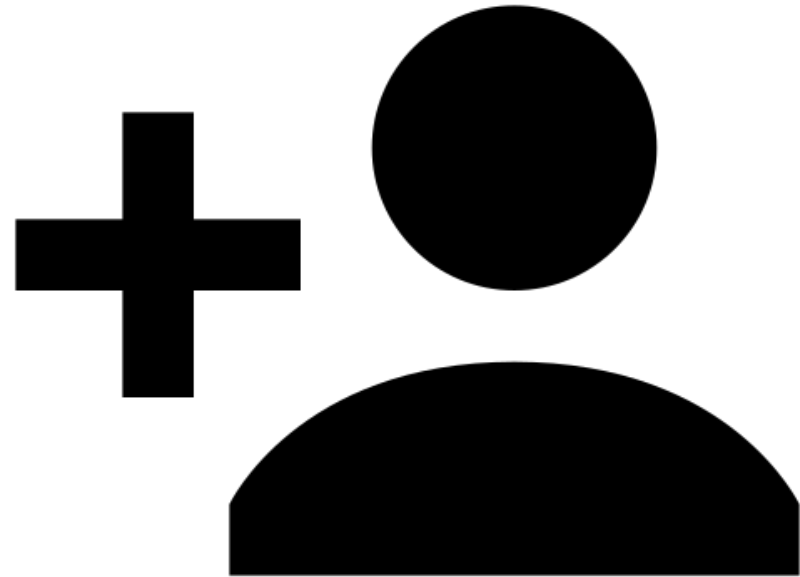
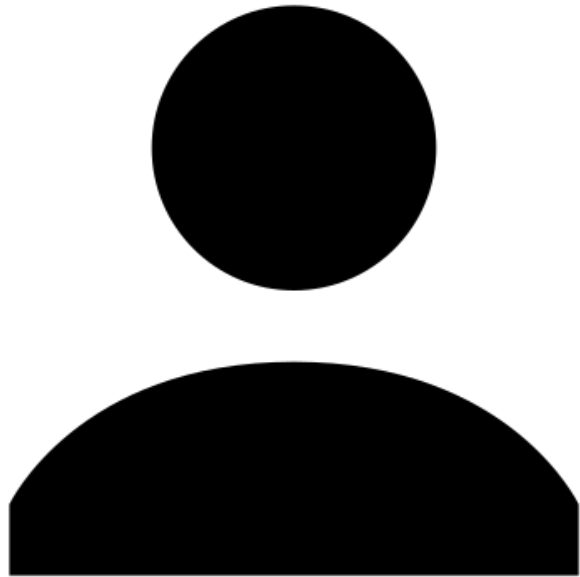
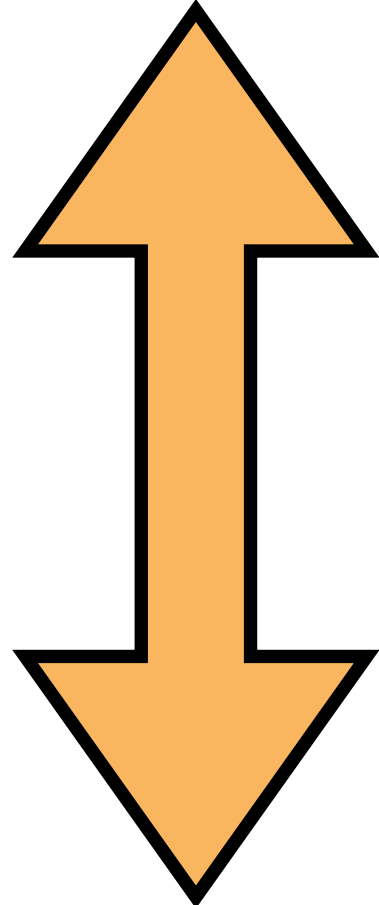
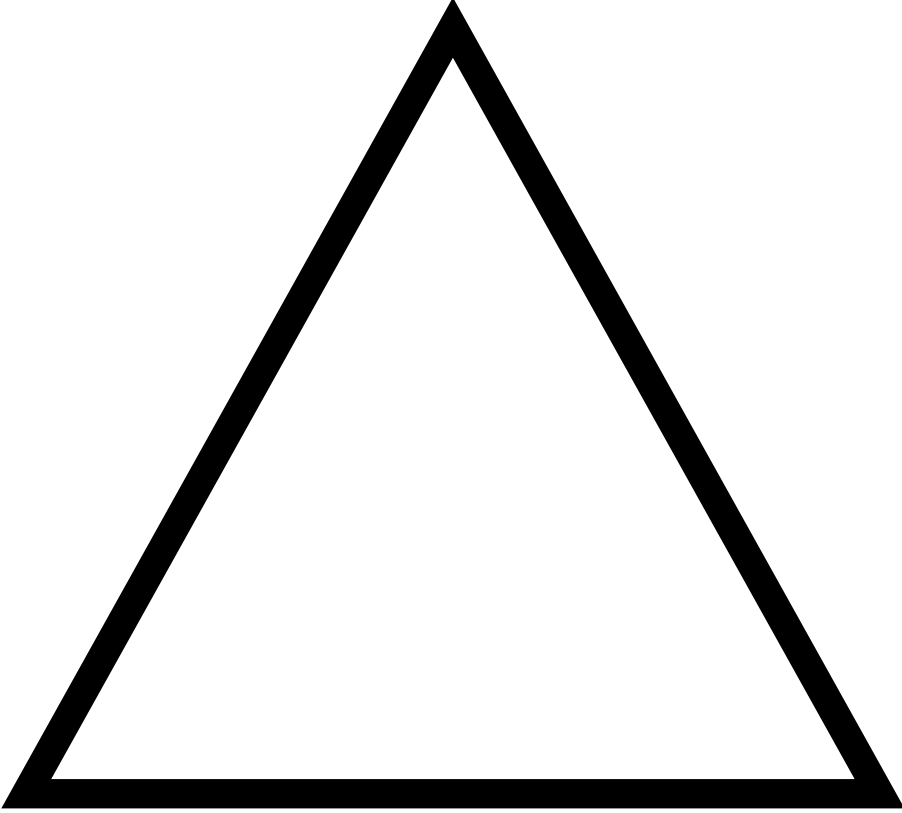


A dandelion seed head is shown against a teal background. The seed head is in the upper right corner, with its stem extending downwards. The seeds are white and fluffy, and the background is a gradient of teal colors.

FORGIVENESS

Letting Go of Grudges and Bitterness

Levels of forgiveness



Why is it important?

Biblical Christianity is all about relationships.

- We were created for relationships (Genesis 1:26.27; 2:18).
- We were redeemed for relationships (Exodus 19:4; Revelation 21:3).
- Good relationships are a witness about our and Jesus' identity as well as about God's love (John 13:35; 17:21.23).

Why should Christians forgive?

1. We have been forgiven (Romans 5:8).
2. In Christ, we are new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17).
3. We are assigned to ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18).
4. The Church is held to higher standard (Collosians 3:12-14; 1 Peter 3:8-9).
5. Forgiveness is manifestation of love, and love is what God expects from us (Matthew 22:37-40).



“To err is human, to forgive, divine.”

- Alexander Pope

“To forgive is divine, but we are only humans.”

- Anonymous

Excuse **or** explanation?

The need for forgiveness #1: Debt dynamic

A close-up photograph of a red pencil erasing the word "Debt" on a white surface. The pencil is held at an angle, and the eraser tip is in contact with the word, creating a cloud of red eraser shavings. The word "Debt" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

Debt

Revenge



Silence



Avoidance



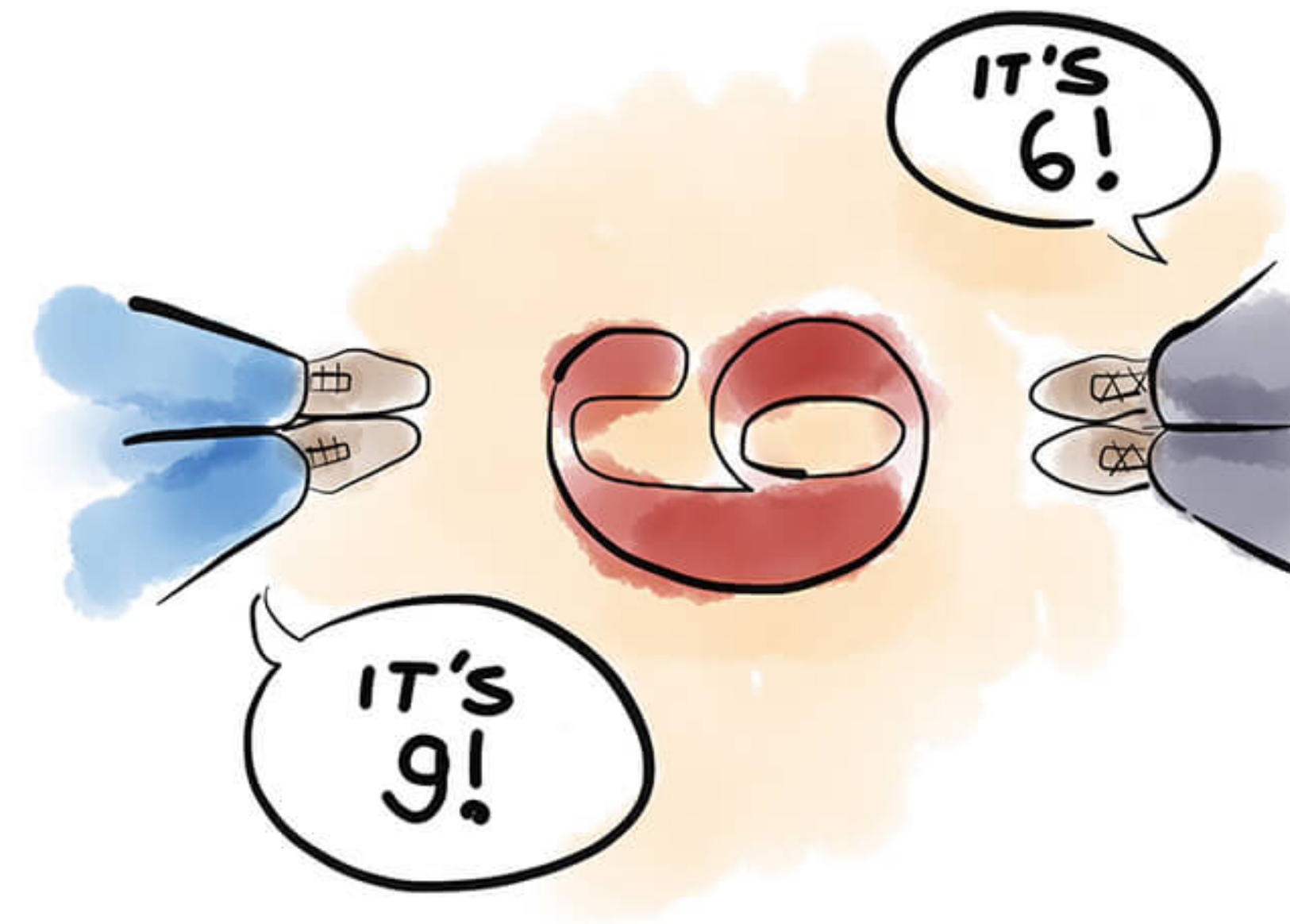
Gossip



Two perspectives or The magnitude gap

Victims exaggerate the severity of the offence,
perpetrators tend to minimise and downplay it.

Both victims and perpetrators distort the narrative.





The need for forgiveness #2: Hurt
that is ...

... personal,

... undeserved, and

... substantial.




GRUDGE

FORGIVENESS



Why do we hold grudges?

1. Claims on rewards and benefits
2. To prevent recurrence
3. To continue suffering
4. Pride and revenge
5. Principled refusal



Give up
possibilities for
happiness

Negative
feelings

Undermining
of functioning

Relationship
damage/
termination

Costs of holding a grudge

What forgiveness isn't

- Passing over or ignoring the offence.
- Denying the reality of the offence.
- Diminishing the importance of what happened.
- Excusing the offender.
- Holding the offender hostage.



What forgiveness is

- An unmerited act of good will that frees the victim of negative feelings toward offender and thus prevents him/her of harbouring resentment or take vengeance.
- An opportunity for relationship renewal.



Two dimensions of forgiveness

- Emotional (intrapsychic)
- Relational (interpersonal)



Two dimensions of forgiveness: Possible combinations

Emotional	Relational	What happens?
-	+	Hollow forgiveness
+	-	Silent forgiveness
+	+	Total forgiveness
-	-	No forgiveness

Some additional facts about forgiveness

- ▶ Forgiving takes only one person, reconciliation takes two.
- ▶ Forgiveness is unlimited (“70x7”), but it is not a permission for repeating the offence.
- ▶ Emotional healing always accompanies forgiveness.
- ▶ To forgive does not mean to forget, but it does mean not to bring up the offence again.
- ▶ To forgive is easier if the offender confesses.
- ▶ Forgiveness can elicit confession.



Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as
God in Christ forgave you.

Ephesians 4:32, The Message

A dandelion seed head is shown against a teal background. The seed head is in the upper right corner, with its stem extending downwards. The seeds are white and fluffy, and the background is a gradient of teal colors.

FORGIVENESS

Letting Go of Grudges and Bitterness