

Limits to Forgiveness?

Name: _____

Have you ever done something to hurt a friend and thought, “I messed up too badly this time. Our friendship is over”? Or maybe a friend hurt you badly, and you ended the friendship.

Friendships are rewarding, but they can also be difficult. We all make mistakes that have negative effects on our friends. In such situations, it is important to be honest with the friend, to apologize for the ways we have hurt that person, and to ask for forgiveness. This last step is particularly difficult because it is our friend’s choice whether to forgive us.

In our friendship with God, we will also make mistakes. We will choose worldly things instead of God, or we will act in a way that hurts another person. Just like in our friendships, we must repent for our sins and repair our relationship with God.

Independent Reflection

Are there any sins that God will not forgive? *Circle one.* **Yes** **No**

Explain your answer.

Small Group Reflection

Are there any sins that God will not forgive? *Circle one.* **Yes** **No**

Explain your answer.

Class Reflection

Did your original answer to the question change at all after your group discussion?

What is one new thought that you had during this class about God’s forgiveness?

Deadly Sins Review

Name: _____

.....

Instructions:

Match each deadly sin with its correct definition.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| _____ 1. Pride | A. The disordered desire for sexual pleasure |
| _____ 2. Wrath | B. The excessive desire for pleasure from food and drink |
| _____ 3. Lust | C. A disordered love of self or desire to be exalted above others |
| _____ 4. Envy | D. A sadness at someone else's good and an excessive desire to gain possession of it |
| _____ 5. Gluttony | E. Laziness, a lack of a desire to fulfill our duties |
| _____ 6. Greed | F. An overreaction to a real wrong or an irrational reaction to something we mistakenly think is wrong |
| _____ 7. Sloth | G. The excessive desire to accumulate money or possessions |

Instructions:

Match each deadly sin with its opposing virtue.

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| _____ 1. Pride | A. Chastity |
| _____ 2. Wrath | B. Generosity |
| _____ 3. Lust | C. Diligence |
| _____ 4. Envy | D. Gratitude |
| _____ 5. Gluttony | E. Humility |
| _____ 6. Greed | F. Patience |
| _____ 7. Sloth | G. Temperance |

The Golden Mean

Name: _____

Aristotle was a thinker who lived in Greece from 384 to 322 B.C. One topic Aristotle wrote a lot about was morality. He emphasized the importance of practicing the virtues in order that those virtues might become part of a person’s character. To be patient, a person must practice the virtue of patience. To be temperate, a person must practice the virtue of temperance.

Aristotle wrote that each virtue is the mean, or average, of two extreme vices. One vice is a deficiency, or lack, of the virtue and the opposite vice is an excess, or too much, of the virtue. The average of the two extremes of vice is the Golden Mean. This can be thought of as a scale:



For example, humility is a virtue in which a person acknowledges that the gifts and talents she has are ultimately from God and that the right use of these gifts is in the service of God. The deficiency of humility is self-deprecation, in which a person belittles herself and denies having natural gifts or talents. The excess of humility is pride, in which a person thinks too much of herself and does not recognize the source of her talents or the talents of others.

As discussed in the text, righteous anger is anger over an injustice that is expressed in the right way and at the right time. The deficiency of righteous anger is apathy, in which a person is not affected by the injustices he sees. The excess of righteous anger is wrath, in which anger is expressed in the wrong way, for the wrong reason, or at the wrong time.

Finally, the virtue of temperance is the mean between licentiousness, or a complete lack of control over the desire for pleasure, and complete self-denial, in which a person views all pleasure as evil.

See the table below for a visual representation of these virtues and vices:

Deficiency	Golden Mean	Excess
Self-Deprecation	Humility	Pride
Apathy	Righteous Anger	Wrath
Complete Self-Denial	Temperance	Licentiousness

Aristotle also notes that each person is typically drawn to one extreme or the other, as determined by one’s personality and natural disposition. For example, a person might have a natural tendency toward wrath but is rarely apathetic. This person will have to work to move from the excess to the mean of righteous anger. Meanwhile, a person who tends to be apathetic might need to develop the habit of being affected by injustices and violations of dignity.

Think about the virtue of fortitude, or moral courage. What is the excess of courage? What is its deficiency?

Consider the virtue of humility. Which extreme are you more inclined toward—self-deprecation or pride? How could you grow in the virtue of humility?
