

## Supreme Forgiveness

*James 5:16, "Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."*

Clarence Thomas was President Bush's (41) choice for nomination to the Supreme Court following Thurgood Marshall's retirement in 1991. Clarence Thomas, a forty-three year old (at the time), conservative, African-American from Pinpoint, Georgia. If Clarence Thomas was voted in to the Supreme Court he would maintain the racial makeup of the Court as Thurgood Marshall was African American, yet would add another conservative voice on decisions involving Affirmative Action and abortion. There was controversy surrounding President Bush's nomination of Clarence Thomas for various reasons including what some believed to be a lack of experience as Clarence Thomas served only two years as a federal judge.

Through the voices of dissent, the Thomas nomination proceeded to go before the Senate Judiciary Committee for confirmation hearing. This is where the Senate has the opportunity to question a nominee about their past and also their views on various subjects. The first stages of the nomination process had gone through fairly easily considering the normal political dissent.

When the nomination moved to the final stages is where things got very interesting. Anita Hill, a law professor at the University of Oklahoma came forward accusing Clarence Thomas of sexually harassing her. Anita Hill had worked with Clarence Thomas years earlier. Anita Hill claimed that Clarence Thomas harassed her with inappropriate talk of sexual acts and pornographic films after she rejected his offers of a date.

This blew up into a nationwide media frenzy. Supporters of Clarence Thomas called the allegations ridiculous and unfounded; while others said that this was one more reason for him not to be on the Supreme Court. Anita Hill stood by her allegations and Clarence Thomas denied the events ever took place. It turned into a matter of he said - she said, as there was no evidence and it was one person's word against another's.

In the end of the confirmation the Senate voted 52-48 to confirm Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court where he still resides today.

The story was part of American history until recently where it has been put back into the spotlight. According to various reports, Anita Hill who is now a professor at Brandeis University received a message on her voice mail at work from Clarence Thomas' wife.

"Good morning, Anita Hill, it's Ginny Thomas," said the voice. "I just wanted to reach across the airwaves and the years and ask you to consider something. I would love you to consider

an apology sometime and some full explanation of why you did what you did with my husband. So give it some thought and certainly pray about this and come to understand why you did what you did. OK, have a good day.”

Clarence Thomas’s wife Virginia Thomas is asking Anita Hill for an apology. You and I have no real way of knowing if anything happened between Clarence Thomas and Anita Hill, but Clarence Thomas’ wife surely has his back after all these years and still wants an apology from Anita Hill for her husband. Anita Hill has never changed her allegations and says there is no reason for any sort of apology; the allegations have never been proven true or false.

At the very least the recent events present a great number of interesting questions which can be based in scripture.

### **Group Discussion**

1. Almost 20 years after the fact, **IF ( and it’s a BIG IF, as no one has any way of knowing )** Anita Hill was deceitful and lied about what happened, should she reach out and apologize to Clarence Thomas for her allegations?

2. Is 20 years too long for someone to apologize for something they did?

3. What does the following scripture mean to you? :

#### Matthew 5:23 – 24

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

4. Have you ever received an apology from someone long after the fact? How did you feel? Upset they waited so long or happy they finally apologized?

5. Is there anyone in your life **you owe an apology to?**