



The Building Block of Forgiveness

Week of July 25, 2021

Intro Discussion Question(s):

- *Why is forgiveness so important to building healthy relationships?*
- *Describe what forgiving others does for you and for them.*

Read Bible Study Summary:

In Ephesians 4, the Apostle Paul makes it clear that Christianity is marked by a new kind of life that is different from the old self before the believer was saved. Therefore, each day is filled with opportunities to respond to the Holy Spirit by making choices to “put off” the old self and “put on” the new self through the power of Christ. Paul has already admonished the Ephesian church about speaking truthfully, not sinning in anger, everyone doing their part in the body of Christ, and speaking with wholesome words. The next issue that he addresses is the importance of forgiveness in building healthy relationships.

Main Scripture

- *Read Ephesians 4:31-32*

What are common misconceptions about God’s Word regarding forgiveness?

1. Forgiveness is saying it's okay for another to hurt you.
 2. Forgiveness is saying what someone did to you is right.
 3. Forgiveness is taking the blame for a wrong done to you.
 4. Forgiveness is about denying the pain another has caused you.
 5. Forgiveness is the ability to completely forget what has been done.
 6. Forgiveness means you have to submit to or remain in an abusive relationship.
- **Ask Question**
 - *Have you ever believed one or more of these misconceptions about forgiveness? In what ways have these misconceptions about forgiveness affected your relationships with others who have wronged you? When you have wronged others?*

What does God's word say about forgiving others?

1. Get Rid of the Sins that Prevent Forgiveness (4:30-31)

- In order to have the building block of forgiveness in our relationships, we must first not grieve the Holy Spirit by allowing sin into our hearts that prevents us from forgiving others. The presence of ***bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander and malice*** in your heart toward another person is an indicator that you have not been willing to forgive. If you have truly forgiven someone, then God's word says there is no reason to allow a single one of these things to be a part of your life. They are all impurities that need to be burned away in the Lord's refining fire. If not, they will take over your life by cluttering your mind, your thoughts, and negatively affect every relationship you have, including your relationship with God.
- ***Read Colossians 3:5-11*** - *5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.*
- **Ask Questions**
 - *In what ways have sinful attitudes like those listed above hindered someone from forgiving you for a wrong you committed?*
 - *How have they affected your ability to extend forgiveness to others who have wronged you?*

2. Embrace the Godly Virtues that Promote Forgiveness (4:32)

- When we rid ourselves of the vices listed above, a vacuum is created in the heart that is to be filled by the lovely virtues of kindness and compassion. "Kind" means to be helpful and "compassion" means "tenderheartedness" toward the weaknesses and miseries of others. Paul indicates that these are the marks of the Christian on display when forgiveness is given to another person. The word "forgiveness" is built on the same word as "grace" with the added actions of "freely given" or "pardoning." Put together, Christians are supposed to freely give grace to others - pardoning others in our hearts for wrongs committed against us.
- Ultimately, God is the one who sets the standard for forgiveness. He has freely forgiven us of our wrongs "in Christ." Therefore, motivated by God's incredible generosity toward his people in granting complete forgiveness, we are to extend that to one another.¹
- ***Read Colossians 3:12-14*** - *12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*
- **Ask Questions**
 - *Describe a time when you have forgiven someone else. How did it make you feel? What changed in you as a result of your forgiveness?*

¹ William W. Klein, *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, vol 12 (Nashville, TN: Zondervan, 2006), 133.

- *Describe a time when someone has forgiven you. How did it make you feel? What changed in you as a result of their forgiveness?*
- *Who is God asking you to forgive right now? What needs to change in your heart to make that decision?*

Closing

- **Ask Question** - *What is the greatest challenge you are facing right now? Is there some way our group can help you specifically?*
- Pray together over those requests.