
FORGIVENESS

THE PASSAGE:

Ephesians 4:30-32

THE KEY PHRASES:

Ephesians 4:31

- ▶ Bitterness = longstanding resentment.
- ▶ Rage & Anger = burst of temper and unresolved anger.
- ▶ Brawling & Slander = insulting language.
- ▶ Malice = ill will.

All of these are simply the results of being unforgiving.

WHY WE NEED TO FORGIVE:

Ephesians 4:30, Matthew 5:23-24, Matthew 6:12-15

Dad cares about how His kids get along.

Forgiveness is a command, not an option.

HOW DO WE FORGIVE:

Ephesians 4:32, Romans 12:14-21, 1 Peter 3:8-12, Matthew 18:21-35

Remember how you have been forgiven.

Remember who they belong to.

Give grace, not justice.

RESULTS OF FORGIVENESS:

Ephesians 4:32, Matthew 11:28-30, Matthew 18:31-35

We get rid of our baggage.

We have a greater impact on others.

“Genuine forgiveness, from the heart, is required of all who have been forgiven.” David Guzik

Growth Group Homework

For the week of May 22, 2005

QUICK REVIEW

This weekend we were reminded of how important it is for us to forgive. Take a minute and look over your notes and then read Ephesians 4:30-32. What were you most encouraged or challenged by?

MY STORY

1. Forgiveness tends to be more of a journey than an event. Sometimes we don't want to be on that journey; we don't want to forgive. What are some of the reasons people have for holding onto grudges and not forgiving?

2. When we get close to others we will occasionally hurt them. Sometimes we need to say, "I'm sorry." Other times we need to ask for forgiveness as well. What's the difference between these two responses? Can you think of a time when you had to apologize to someone and ask for forgiveness?

Asking for forgiveness can be tough sometime. Why do you think that is?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Remembering our need for forgiveness and God's incredible provision of it will help us become generous in our forgiveness of others. The following verses take us back to the basics. Stop and reflect on each passage and underline any key principles. How does each passage help you grow in your ability or motivation to forgive?

Isaiah 53:6

We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all. [NIV]

Isaiah 59:1-3

Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save,
nor his ear too dull to hear.
[2] But your iniquities have separated
you from your God;
your sins have hidden his face from you,
so that he will not hear.

[3] For your hands are stained with blood,
your fingers with guilt.
Your lips have spoken lies,
and your tongue mutters wicked things. [NIV]

Isaiah 55:6-7

Seek the Lord while he may be found;
call on him while he is near.
[7] Let the wicked forsake his way
and the evil man his thoughts.
Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him,
and to our God, for he will freely pardon. [NIV]

Jeremiah 33:6-9

" 'Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security. [7] I will bring Judah and Israel back from captivity and will rebuild them as they were before. [8] I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me. [9] Then this city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honor before all nations on earth that hear of all the good things I do for it; and they will be in awe and will tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide for it.' [NIV]

Colossians 3:12-15

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 whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. [14] And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.
[15] Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. [NIV]

2. Every family will have its rough spots, problems or conflicts. God's family is no exception. Pastor Chris pointed out that God cares deeply about how His kids treat each other when there are problems. Read 2 Corinthians 2:5-11. How are we to respond to a family member that blows it, admits it, and is open to change?

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent--not to put it too severely. [6] The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. [7] Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. [8] I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. [9] The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. [10] If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven--if there was anything to forgive--I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, [11] in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes. [NIV]

What plans might Satan have if we are unforgiving, unloving or harsh?

Things are different when blatant sin is not confessed and there is no repentance. Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-13. Are we to withhold forgiveness from this person?

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people-- [10] not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. [11] But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

[12] What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? [13] God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked man from among you." [NIV]

Why are we told to treat believers differently than those outside the church?

3. In Jeremiah 31:34 God says He will forgive His people and remember their sins no more. Does God have amnesia when it comes to sin? Now read Hosea 7:1-2 and 1 Peter 3:18. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting; it means the eternal consequence of our sin is removed. "Forgiving like Christ" means we can forgive even though we still remember how we were wronged. What are some of the dangers and benefits of remembering?

Jeremiah 31:34

No longer will a man teach his neighbor,
or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,'
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest,"
declares the Lord.
"For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more." [NIV]

Now read Hosea 7:1-2 and 1 Peter 3:18.

Hosea 7:1-2

"Whenever I would restore the fortunes of my people,
whenever I would heal Israel,
the sins of Ephraim are exposed
and the crimes of Samaria revealed.
They practice deceit,
thieves break into houses,
bandits rob in the streets;
[2] but they do not realize
that I remember all their evil deeds.
Their sins engulf them;
they are always before me. [NIV]

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit, [NIV]

TAKING IT HOME

1. Forgiveness is not just about letting others off the hook and letting it go when we are wronged. It's also about freeing ourselves from the baggage that we pick up if we are unforgiving. Read Ephesians 4:30-31 again and take a look at the key phrases in this week's sermon outline. Do you see any evidence or symptoms of a lack of forgiveness toward others or yourself in your own life? If so, can you identify someone that you may need to offer grace to and forgive?

Ephesians 4:30-31

And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. [31] Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. [NIV]

2. Do you consciously see other followers of Christ as family? Do you remember that Christ literally lives in the life of every believer? Do you really believe that the way we treat each other affects God? How will this message change the way you forgive?