

What have you found helpful in forgiving people who have treated you badly?

Rob told the story of the praying Irish peasant who acknowledged, "Yes, God is very fond of me." Would you feel comfortable saying that to someone? Why or why not?

REFLECT and RESPOND

Take some time apart from each other to be alone with God in silent meditation. Consider the Lord's amazing grace to you, even when you fail to love Him with all your heart, soul, mind and strength. Think of His rich gifts in creation, family and community, meeting daily needs, and wise guidance through difficult times.

Invite God to bring to mind anyone toward whom you hold a grudge or bear resentment, anyone you need to forgive regardless of how large or small the offense, or how long since it occurred. Write their name(s) below:

If you can honestly do so, tell the Lord you forgive this person; ask God to generously bless him. Ask God to show you how to communicate this forgiveness and, if possible, reconcile with this person. If you have difficulty forgiving this person, ask God for the faith and willingness to do so. Thank Him for His grace.

Come back together and pray the Lord's Prayer in closing.



OUTLOOK
CHRISTIAN CHURCH
outlookchurch.org
317.335.6815



Who is the kind of person who can best extend the embrace of grace? The one who is himself or herself resting in that same embrace.

Let's become excellent receivers of freedom and love.

Jeremiah 31:3

The LORD appeared to us in the past, saying: "I have loved you with an everlasting love; I have drawn you with unfailing kindness."

Before we are doers of great things or achievers of some level of spiritual maturity, we are (and must always remain) receivers of God's Spirit and grace.

John 15:9,13 (page 739)

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love...

Let's become expert givers of forgiveness and mercy.

Biblically speaking, forgiveness means conforming your relationship and attitude to the Bible despite the wrong that's been done and the hurt that's been afflicted.

EXTENDING THE EMBRACE (FREEDOM AND FORGIVENESS, THE FRUIT OF GRACE)

ROB MCCORD

4.25.2010

OUTLOOK CHRISTIAN CHURCH

> forgetting all you can, and only remembering when you must

Acts 15:36-41

..Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company...

2 Timothy 4:11

Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.

> resisting revenge and not returning evil for evil

Romans 12:19

Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:15

Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

> doing good to them and showing them kindness

Luke 6:35

But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

> grieving at their calamities

Proverbs 24:17

Do not gloat when your enemies fall;
when they stumble, do not let your heart rejoice...

> praying for their welfare

Matthew 5:44

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...

> seeking reconciliation so far as it depends on you

Romans 12:18

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Some things can be forgiven and forgotten, in fact many things. Some things cannot or even should not be forgotten. That doesn't mean they are not forgiven.

Forgive Us as We Forgive Others...

LIFE GROUP STUDY

RELATE

What driving behaviors annoy you when you are the passenger in a car?

What instances of forgiveness are significant to you? (Some examples: Nelson Mandela after apartheid; Amish parents whose children were shot at school; LA man beaten in riots)

What thought from the sermon was most meaningful or challenging to you?

READ

Matthew 18:21-35

Jesus expands the disciples' understanding of forgiveness

What does Peter's question indicate he understands about forgiveness? How does the story Jesus told answer Peter's question?

Compare the two servants' debts, relationships to the person they owe, pleas, and the decisions about their cases.

How would you describe the response of the king's servant after his debt is completely cancelled? Does he act like someone who has just escaped a terrible fate and received incredible grace? How do you explain that?

Why is it necessary to first become "excellent receivers of freedom and love" before we can become "expert givers of forgiveness and mercy"?

What helps you recognize and appreciate the kindnesses you receive on a daily basis?