

This past Sunday Pastor Dale introduced the aspect of forgiveness in healthy relationships in “relationships in forgiveness”.

Human relationships move from: Simplicity-Complexity-Conflict-Confrontation-Escalation-Greater Complexity.

God’s plan is: Simplicity-Complexity-Conflict-Resolution-Forgiveness-Restoration.

We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love. There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies. (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

In Matthew 18:21-35 Jesus tells us the standard for forgiveness.

When Do I Forgive Others?

1. Resist thoughts of revenge
2. Do them no harm
3. Wish well to them
4. Grieve at their calamities
5. Pray for them
6. Seek reconciliation with them
7. Be always willing to come to their relief

What Forgiveness is not:

1. Not the absence of anger or hurt
2. Not the absence of serious consequences
3. Not the absence of responsibility

How Do I Forgive?

1. Recognize, receive and embrace God’s forgiveness
2. Must be postured for forgiveness (Colossians 3:12-15, Ephesians 4:32)
3. Be empowered by God through surrender (Ephesians 4:29-31)
4. Trust God (1 Peter 2:21-23)

Practical Application

1. God wants us to forgive. Has there been a time in your life where this seemed like it was an impossible mountain for you?
2. How does unforgiveness affect relationships?
3. In Matthew 18:21-35 Jesus tells us about forgiveness and shows us what will happen to those that refuse to forgive. Spend some time on this chapter in Matthew and ask God to speak to you regarding His Word.
4. It is clear that we can only truly forgive someone with God’s help. What are some practical ways that we can grow in forgiveness and in turn grow in our relationships?

What is forgiveness? “When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies mischief, but wish them well, grieve at their calamities, pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them”. (Thomas Watson, Body of Divinity)