

No Greater Love

Galatians 5:16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

Colossians 3:12-17 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

Four Character Qualities

Two Actions that are typical of a Christ-follower

One Spiritual Foundation

1. We forgive others because God has forgiven us.

Colossians 3:12-13 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

- **Forgiveness is a part of our spiritual DNA.**

Colossians 3:1-2 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

Ephesians 4:1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called

- **Forgiveness grows out of our new character.**

Colossians 3:9-10 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.

- Forgiving is based upon choice and not feeling.

2. Forgiveness opens the door for unity, healing, and restoration.

Colossians 3:14 Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

- **An unforgiving spirit affects the offended worse than the offender.**

Colossians 3:12-13 ...put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone...

- **An unforgiving spirit eventually impacts the lives of others.**

Colossians 3:13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other,

- “Bearing” means to hold yourself back from someone.

Hebrews 12:14 “Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.”

- **Forgiveness allows us to see others through the eyes of unconditional love.**
 - “Beyond everything, put on love.”
 - Does our heart soften so we can forgive, or do we forgive so our hearts can soften?

3. **Forgiveness testifies of God’s grace and mercy.**

Colossians 3:17 Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

- What does that mean to do something in the name of Jesus?
- It means acting in a way so as to reflect Christ’s character and mission.
- It’s significant that the root word in the Greek word forgive is grace.

- **Nothing testifies of God’s forgiving grace any better than when we forgive others.**

Acts 7:59-8:1 They went on stoning Stephen as he called on *the Lord* and said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” 60 Then falling on his knees, he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them!” Having said this, he fell asleep. 1 Saul was in hearty agreement with putting him to death.

- **Through forgiving, we extend God’s grace to others.**

Hebrews 12:14-15 “Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. ¹⁵ See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

- Have you been holding out on offering the grace of forgiveness for anyone?
- Are you willing to be willing to forgive?
- Who is someone you need to forgive and will take steps toward forgiving this week?