



May 15, 2016
Elevation · 11:00 am
Pastor Matt Doan

Our Journey of Forgiveness Ephesians 4:30-32

Our journey of forgiveness begins with understanding the role of the Holy Spirit. Eph. 4:30
“Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”

- The Holy Spirit is grieved by our sinful actions and attitudes (Ephesians 4:25-32)
- The Holy Spirit’s role in your life – signed, sealed and delivered
- The Holy Spirit’s goal for your life – to bring God glory (Ephesians 1:13-14)

Our journey of forgiveness involves a supernatural exchange. Ephesians 4:31-32a

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other...”

- A supernatural exchange
 - from bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, slander, malice
 - to kindness, tenderheartedness and forgiveness

Our journey of forgiveness is motivated by the forgiveness we have received. Eph. 4:32b
“...just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

- Jesus’ journey of forgiveness (Luke 23:34)
- The Parable of the King (Matthew 18:21-35)
- Jesus sets you free (John 8:36)
- A lifestyle of forgiveness

“The key to all human behavior lies in man's relationship with God, not with his relationship with his fellow man.”
– Ray Steadman

Digging Deeper: (adapted from Ken Sande, Peacemakers.net)

Conflict is not necessarily bad or destructive. Even when conflict is caused by sin and causes a great deal of stress, God can use it for good (see Rom. 8:28-29). As the Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:31 - 11:1, conflict actually provides three significant opportunities. By God's grace, you can use conflict to:

- Glorify God (by trusting, obeying, and imitating Him)
- Serve other people (by helping to bear their burdens or by confronting them in love)
- Grow to be like Christ (by confessing sin and turning from attitudes that promote conflict)

These concepts are totally overlooked in most conflicts because people naturally focus on escaping from the situation or overcoming their opponent. Therefore, it is wise to periodically step back from a conflict and ask yourself whether you are doing all that you can to take advantage of these special opportunities.

There are 4 G's to resolving conflict:

1st G: Glorify God

You can glorify God in the midst of conflict by trusting him, obeying him, and imitating him (see Prov. 3:4-6; John 14:15; Eph. 5:1). One of the best ways to keep these concerns uppermost in your mind is to regularly ask yourself this focusing question: "How can I please and honor the Lord in this situation?"

2nd G: Get the plank out of your own eye

There are generally two kinds of planks or "logs" you need to look for when dealing with conflict. First, you need to ask whether you have had a critical, negative, or overly sensitive attitude that has led to unnecessary conflict. One of the best ways to do this is to spend some time meditating on Philippians 4:2-9, which describes the kind of attitude Christians should have even when they are involved in a conflict. The second kind of log you must deal with is actual sinful words and actions. Because you are often blind to your own sins, you may need an honest friend or advisor who will help you to take an objective look at yourself and face up to your contribution to a conflict. When you identify ways that you have wronged another person, it is important to admit your wrongs honestly and thoroughly.

3rd G: Gently restore

- Pray for humility and wisdom
- Plan your words carefully (think of how you would want to be confronted)
- Anticipate likely reactions and plan appropriate responses (rehearsals can be very helpful)
- Choose the right time and place (talk in person whenever possible)
- Assume the best about the other person until you have facts to prove otherwise (Prov. 11:27)
- Listen carefully (Prov. 18:13)
- Speak only to build others up (Eph. 4:29)
- Ask for feedback from the other person
- Recognize your limits (only God can change people; see Rom. 12:18; 2 Tim. 2:24-26)

4th G: Go and be reconciled

One of the most unique features of biblical peacemaking is the pursuit of genuine forgiveness and reconciliation. Even though Christians have experienced the greatest forgiveness in the world, we often fail to show that forgiveness to others. To cover up our disobedience we often use the shallow statement, "I forgive her – I just don't want to have anything to do with her again." Just think, however, how you would feel if God said to you, "I forgive you; I just don't want to have anything to do with you again"? Praise God that he never says this! Instead, he forgives you totally and opens the way for genuine reconciliation. He calls you to forgive others in exactly the same way: "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Col. 3:12-14; see also 1 Cor. 13:5; Psalm 103:12; Isa. 43:25). Remember that forgiveness is a spiritual process that you cannot fully accomplish on your own. Therefore, as you seek to forgive others, continually ask God for grace to enable you to imitate his wonderful forgiveness toward you.

LifeGroup Discussion:

1. Read Ephesians 4:25-31. Why do our actions (lying, anger, stealing, unwholesome words) and our attitudes (bitterness) grieve the Holy Spirit? How is the Holy Spirit's work in our life impacted by His grief?
2. Read Ephesians 4:32. What is our motivation for forgiving others? Have an honest conversation as a group about specific ways you can encourage one another to be followers of Jesus who live a lifestyle of forgiveness.
3. Whom are you struggling to forgive? What is one specific step you can take to move forward in your journey of forgiveness with that person? How can the group encourage you as you take this step?