

FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER

PRECEPT

Ephesians 4:32

³² Be kind to one another, and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ.

PROMISE

Why is forgiveness so difficult? Every one of us has someone whose name immediately comes to mind when we hear the word forgiveness. Maybe it's someone who lied or betrayed you. Maybe they've already apologized or they never will. And maybe after all these years it still hurts—because forgiveness is one of the hardest things God asks us to do. Forgiveness is not easy, but when you look at the cross and how God has forgiven you, you can forgive others.

BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER. Paul didn't begin with forgiveness; he began with kindness because kindness softens the heart. Kindness changes the atmosphere before difficult conversations even begin. Think about Jesus; even when people rejected Him and mocked Him, He still responded with kindness. Kindness doesn't mean you ignore the truth. It means you choose to treat people with grace and dignity, even when they've hurt you. If we want healthy relationships, kindness must become our first response, not anger.

BE TENDER-HEARTED TO ONE ANOTHER. Some translations say "compassionate." The picture Paul gives is someone whose heart is soft, and not hard. Let's be honest, when someone hurts us, our natural tendency is to build walls around our hearts. Bitterness hardens the heart, but Paul said, be compassionate—be tender-hearted. A tender heart doesn't mean you're naive. It means you refuse to let someone else's sin change the kind of person God is making you. Don't let the hurt in your heart become hardness in your heart. Keep your heart tender before God.

FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER. Just as God forgave you in Christ. This is the foundation of everything. Paul doesn't simply say, "Forgive." He says, "Forgive just as God forgave you." In other words, our forgiveness of others flows from God's forgiveness of us. Why do we forgive? Not because people deserve it or they've apologized, nor because it's easy. We forgive because we have already been forgiven. Think about the cross. Jesus didn't wait for us to deserve forgiveness. Romans 5 says, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." The cross reminds us that God paid the price for our sin instead of requiring us to pay it ourselves. Since He has forgiven what we could never repay, we are called to extend that same grace to those who have wronged us. The cross doesn't make what they did to us smaller—it reminds us that what Christ forgave in us was greater. That's why forgiveness is possible: because God's grace is greater than our hurt.

Forgiveness is saying, "I refuse to let what happened continue to control my heart." When we remember the grace we've received, it becomes easier to extend grace to others. Healthy churches are not made up of perfect people, but of forgiven people who keep forgiving one another. Because that's exactly what the Gospel does. The Gospel doesn't erase the fact that we've sinned; it declares that through Christ our sins have been forgiven. When forgiven people live together, forgiveness becomes our culture.

PRACTICE

1. **Forgive.** Has someone ever forgiven you when you felt you didn't deserve it? How did that affect you?
2. **One Another.** Is there someone you find difficult to forgive? What makes it hard? And how can we pray for you regarding this?

PRAYER

I. Growth

- Pray for growth; in all aspects of our lives.

II. Members

- Pray for our community to grow in relationship with God.

III. Disciples

- Pray that we will reflect God's love and grace as we obey in making disciples.

IV. Pastors

- May God's favour rest upon them and may they not grow weary in well-doing.

V. Leaders

- Pray for protection and provision for our elders, leaders, and coordinators.

VI. Peace

- May the Lord grant us peace, and guide our steps in the way of peace.

VII. Family

- Pray for loving, harmonious and Christ-centred families.