



Week 4 – Forgiving Others... and Yourself

We all have good days and bad days -- times when we are patient and accepting, and times when someone's habits or critical comments don't go down too well. Have you noticed that most people (even families) can't be together for long periods without starting to irritate one another? It's true. It's also true that we can be hurt most by those we love; their opinion of us and the way they treat us has an enormous impact on our feelings and self-esteem. Clearly, forgiveness is one of the most important skills a strong family, it is equally true that forgiving ourselves is essential for a healthy soul and spirit.

What does it mean to forgive someone? Where did you learn this definition?

Which person in your life has been the hardest to forgive? Why?

Can you think of a time when someone hurt you, and it was easy for you to forgive them? If so, why was it so easy? Was it because of the person involved, or because of the circumstances?

In your life, what decision or action do you most regret? Why?

Read Romans 5: 10, Luke 23:33-34, and I John 1:8 -9

According to these verses, we were all sinners and even "enemies" of God before He forgave us. In the passage from Luke, Jesus forgave us even while he was being crucified. Take a moment to think about what you've done to disobey God and hurt others. How does it feel to be forgiven? Describe your feelings.

As you read these verses, does forgiveness sound like a suggestion or a command? Do you see any consequences for unforgiveness? How does unforgiveness affect a person's relationship with God?



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Read Romans 12:18 and Ephesians 4:2-3. Re-read Ephesians 3:12-15

What do you think it means to "live in peace"? Are there any negative emotions or conflicts in your life that are robbing you (or your family) of peace.

Think about the most recent situation in which someone treated you badly, or was unfair to you. Listen words to describe your feelings. Were you angry? Did you want to "get back at them"?

Now look at the list you just made and compare the words to Galatians 5:20, then to 5:22-23. Which passage best matches with your list of emotions?

How do negative emotions like anger affect your ability to "live in peace"? If you make a decision to forgive, and then waved the opportunity to take revenge, how will it affect the peacefulness in your life?

Summary

How peaceful and guilt free is your life?

Is there anyone (including yourself), you haven't forgiven? (Write their name, and what they did)

Once you have made your list of anyone you have not forgiven, go through the list at specifically forgive each person.

Say, "I forgive _____ for _____." Then
_____." Then
destroy the list.

Ask each of your family members if you have done anything to hurt them recently. If so, apologize and ask for forgiveness.

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