

Forgiveness: What is It?

Colossians 3:12-15

1. Share a time when you had to forgive someone who insulted you or hurt you in some way. How long did it take to get to a place where you really felt like forgiveness had taken place?
2. Pastor Mark tells the story of baseball player Roberto Alomar and Major League umpire John Hirschbeck, who went from being bitter enemies to becoming good friends. We can sometimes recall stories of how good friends turn into bitter enemies, but can you recall a story where two people went from being enemies to becoming friends?
3. Pastor Mark points out that we often blame our current level of division and dissention on politics, cable news networks, talk radio and social media. He suggests that these are not the problem, but merely the outlets that reveal the problem. Mark suggests that the problem lies in the human heart. Do you agree or disagree, why or why not?
4. In your mind, what can be done today to lower the level of anger, rage, and division that seems to be impacting our society?
5. Mark points out that the early Church also dealt with division and dissention. Read Colossians 3:12-15. How did the leaders of the early Church instruct people to work through their relationship issues?
6. Re-read Colossians 3:13. What do you think it means to “bear with one another” or “put up with one another?”
7. Forgiveness does not mean that we must tolerate hurtful or hateful behavior, or that we cannot hold people accountable for their behavior. How might it be possible to forgive someone, but still hold that person accountable?
8. In your mind, what is the difference between seeking justice and exacting vengeance?
9. When someone says, “forgive and forget,” what do you think that means?
10. What is the difference between forgiving someone and pretending that nothing ever happened to harm the relationship?
11. Pastor Mark suggests that forgiveness does not necessarily mean that you will become close friends or best friends with the person who harmed you. How is forgiveness different from complete restoration of the relationship?
12. How does receiving forgiveness from God for our sins help us find the grace to forgive others who have hurt us?
13. Pastor Mark says that the word “forgiveness” does not mean to forget, but to release. In what way is forgiveness a release?