

## “The Truth About Forgiveness, Trust, and Reconciliation”

For the week of July 30 - August 5, 2017

### Warm Up:

What are three qualities that make a person trustworthy?

### Main Thought:

All relationships are based on trust, but sometimes trust is broken. When that happens, God’s Word teaches us to:

1. Forgive unconditionally and immediately. This is a choice that keeps us in good standing with God, while placing the other party in the hands of God. Remember that this is a choice made repeatedly and not based on feelings.
2. Give it time to heal gradually and completely. Residue of hurt doesn’t necessarily mean you haven’t forgiven, it’s just that you haven’t adequately healed. Continual forgiveness will enhance that. Heal well before attempting to re-connect.
3. Trust again carefully. While forgiveness is given, trust has to be earned to restore safety in a relationship. Look for evidence of true change and watch out for a feigned “performance-repentance.” This is passive manipulation. Pray for God to do a genuine work in you and them. He is the only one who can transform a heart. Psalm 23:3 says *“HE restores my soul.”* An unhealed heart will project that past on others.
4. Reconcile – if possible – gradually and conditionally. While forgiveness should be granted unconditionally, reconciliation depends on safety and trust. Reconciliation may end up being full, partial, or impossible. It will depend on the readiness and willingness of both parties.

### Main Passages:

*“Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.” (Colossians 3:12-13 ESV)*

*“Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. <sup>17</sup>Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. <sup>18</sup>If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. <sup>19</sup>Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, ‘Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.’ <sup>20</sup>To the contrary, ‘if your enemy is hungry, feed him...’” (Romans 12:16-20 ESV)*

### Scripture Exploration:

- Read Colossians 3:12-13. How are we supposed to forgive each other? What does that practically look like?
- Read Romans 12:16-20. Why do we need to let God work on our behalf instead of taking matters into our own hands?

### Personal Reflection:

- Forgiveness is immediate, but trust and reconciliation is a process, not always required. Share a time when you had to walk out all three. What did you learn from that experience?
- Have you trusted too soon and ended up getting hurt again by the same person? What are some signs that help us know we can begin to trust someone again?

### Active Application:

- Is there anyone you still need to forgive? How will you take action instead of waiting for your feelings to change?
- Are there people that you need to create a boundary with because trust was repeatedly broken? What will you practically do?

### Group Prayer:

- Pray for courage to forgive, and wisdom to know when to trust and reconcile.
- Pray for God to touch a specific friend or loved one to respond to your invitation to group or church. Pray that they would come to know Christ personally.

