



grow. pray. study.

May 15, 2022 Resolving Conflict, Showing Grace

Scripture: Colossians 3:12-15

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.

The Power of Forgiveness

MONDAY 5.16.22 Matthew 6:12, 14-15, Luke 23:33-34

"There are six words that may be as important as any spoken in a marriage, perhaps even more important than 'I love you.' The six words are: 'I am sorry' and 'I forgive you.'" * We cannot think seriously about resolving conflict in marriage (or any other close relationship) until we recognize the reality that at times any two people will experience conflict and need to forgive. A good place to start our study is with Jesus, whose very life was God's forgiveness lived out in human flesh.

- For Jesus, forgiveness was a fundamental reality of his Kingdom. If God did not forgive, no fallible human could have hope. Jesus also knew that it's simply not credible to claim God's forgiveness for ourselves if we aren't willing to forgive others. Do your background and temperament make it easier or harder for you to believe that God truly forgives you, and for you to show that forgiveness to others?
- Scholar William Barclay wrote: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors'....It is...quite clear that...if we say, 'I will never forgive so-and-so for what he or she has done to me'...and then take this petition on our lips, we are quite deliberately asking God not to forgive us....To be forgiven we must forgive, and that is a condition of forgiveness which only the power of Christ can enable us to fulfill." ** How can you let Christ saturate your closest relationships with forgiveness?

Prayer: Loving Lord, I must regularly count on your willingness to forgive me. Mold my heart so that those I love can learn to count on that willingness in me. Amen.

* Hamilton, Adam. *Love to Stay* (p. 108). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

** William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew: Volume 1. The Daily Study Bible series, Rev. ed.* Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975, pp. 222-223.

Accepting our need for forgiveness

TUESDAY 5.17.22 Psalm 32:1-7; Luke 18:9-14

Asking God or people for forgiveness, and accepting it, starts with being honest. Often our first challenge is to be honest with ourselves. Most of us are adept at rationalizing even our biggest failings. And we repeatedly see in the lives of public figures that even if we know we've missed the mark, we think we can hide that from others (oddly, even from God!). The psalmist wrote that keeping silent, trying to hide the truth, drained him of energy and life.

- “The choice is yours. You can continue to carry the burden of your sins, or you can allow the Lord to take it from you and set you free, as he wants to do.... The process begins with acknowledgement and sorrow.” * Do you find it hard to admit your mistakes and missteps to yourself, others, or God? How can you open your heart to allow God to give you the courage to be honest?
- How do you see yourself at your deepest level in relation to most others—as “less than” or “more than”? How can Jesus' image of God's forgiveness and love for the outcast tax collector help you see more clearly how God values you? How can God's loving grace help you maintain a healthy sense of spiritual need without sinking into a sense of contempt, either for others or for yourself?

Prayer: Lord God, show mercy to me, a sinner. Remind me daily, hourly, of the truthfulness and the necessity of that prayer. Amen.

* Hamilton, Adam. *Forgiveness: Finding Peace Through Letting Go* (Kindle Locations 281-282, 287). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

Keys to harmonious relating

WEDNESDAY 5.18.22 Romans 12:9-10, 12, 15-16, 18, 21

We often hear the phrase “church family,” based on passages like Romans 12:10 where Paul called Christians in Rome to “love each other like the members of your family.” But that call made no sense if actual families couldn't love well through all of life's challenges and stages. The principles behind the apostle's message to the church speak with even greater power to couples as they work to build committed relationships for all seasons of life.

- In Pastor Hamilton's surveys, “Sharing his or her feelings with me' was on both [women's and men's] lists.” * Further inquiry showed that women and men often have different ideas of how that works. What does it take for both committed partners to be able to regularly “be happy with those who are happy, and cry with those who are crying”? (Many men in our culture shudder at the word “cry.”) How can you learn to respond helpfully to your mate's emotional needs?
- Paul also wrote, “Be the best at showing honor to each other.” At home, we'd often rather “be the best” at other traits, wouldn't we? What inner fears and drives make it hard for you to honor a partner who has different ideas or tastes from yours? In *The Message*, verse 12 reads, “Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder.” ** Do you and your mate pray together? How have you, or can you, make it a habit to turn to God together, particularly during times of conflict or tension?

Prayer: Lord God, let me keep growing my listening skills with the people I care about most, so that I can hear and care about their feelings rather than trying to argue them out of them. Amen.

* Hamilton, Adam. *Love to Stay* (p. 44). Abingdon Press. Kindle Edition.

** Peterson, Eugene H. *The Message Numbered Edition Hardback*. Navpress. Kindle Edition.

The beautiful fruit of being led by the Spirit

THURSDAY 5.19.22 Galatians 5:17-23

This passage listed key qualities God offers to grow in all who make Jesus Lord of their lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Who wouldn't want these qualities in a spouse, a date, or a close friend? Partnering with God to grow these qualities in our lives will build stronger relationships that can last through good times and bad.

- First, the apostle Paul listed actions or attitudes (verses 19-21) that “selfish motives” (Greek “*acts of the flesh*” *) produce. Left unchecked, these are things that will surely destroy any healthy relationship. Review the list. Which of them do you tend to struggle with the most? (Neither “none” or “all of them” is likely to be accurate!) In what ways do they create problems in your closest relationships?
- Now try the same exercise with the qualities Paul called “the fruit of the Spirit” in verses 22-23. How is God at work in you, growing you into a person who lives out these qualities more and more? What steps can you and your partner take to open yourself to God? (At Resurrection, we teach the five keys of *The Walk* as 1) worship/prayer, 2) study, 3) serve, 4) give and 5) share.** For another readable list of often-helpful spiritual practices, [click here](#).)

Prayer: Holy Spirit, plant your fruit in my heart, and teach me how to be good soil in which that fruit can flourish. Let me be a person who gifts others with love, joy, and peace. Amen.

* “When Paul uses the word ‘flesh’...he does not intend us simply to think of the ‘physical’ world ...‘flesh’ refers to people or things who share the corruptibility and mortality of the world...the rebellion of the world.” – Wright, N.T., *Paul for Everyone, Romans Part One: Chapters 1-8* (pp. 140-141). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

** See Adam Hamilton, *The Walk: Five Essential Practices of The Christian Life*. Abingdon Press, 2019.

“The Lord has given us everything we need”

FRIDAY 5.20.22 2 Peter 1:3-8

Peter set forth how every part of us thrives as we open ourselves to let God's power work. John Wesley, Methodism's founder, wrote of this passage in his *Notes on the Bible*: “In this most beautiful connection, each preceding grace leads to the following: each following, tempers and perfects the preceding.” * In different words, but with the same underlying thought Paul shared in [Galatians 5:22-23](#), Peter outlined in this passage a picture of God's power transforming our whole life.

- Peter saw “moral excellence” as fully compatible with “affection for others,” “knowledge” as a solid support for “godliness,” and “self-control” and “endurance” as vital steps on the way to living out “love,” God's defining quality (cf. [1 John 4:8-16](#)). How do you believe a life based solidly in these God-given qualities equips you to give and receive love and affection in enduring ways?
- Mr. Wesley's notes on these verses described a “wonderful cheerfulness” in the passage, and warned that “‘sour godliness,’ so called, is of the devil.” * Have you ever known anyone who seemed to believe that “moral excellence” required “sour godliness”? What helps you trust that God wants your life to be sweet, not sour? Have you seen examples of God's gift of moral excellence creating a life filled with joy and beauty?

Prayer: King Jesus, deliver me from any impulses or examples I have of “sour godliness.” Fill me and guide my growth into the kind of person Peter described as having “everything we need” for life in you. Amen.

* Found at [The Wesley Center Online: Notes On The Second Epistle General Of St Peter \(nnu.edu\)](#).

Living up to your call: humility, gentleness, and patience

SATURDAY 5.21.22 Ephesians 4:1-4, 15-16

We usually read this passage (not wrongly) as a “church” passage. It lays out key principles for people who worship (and sometimes study, serve or give) together. So how much more vital are these principles for people devoted to sharing their whole life together, living under the same roof in a lifelong committed union? Tension and conflicts inevitably arise in every such relationship for one simple reason: we are different. But Ephesians said diversity was God’s plan. It spoke of “accepting each other in love,” and urged all Christ-followers to “live as people worthy of the call you received from God.” Scholar N. T. Wright captured the nature of that call: “At every moment, in every decision, with every word and action, they are to be aware that the call to follow Jesus the Messiah, and give him their complete loyalty, takes precedence over everything else. In particular, this must lead them back again and again to celebrate their unity, to maintain and guard it.” *

- In your closest relationships, do you notice the ways that the differences between people bring depth, richness, and strength (even when they may also pose challenges)? It is a fact that many times the differences were a big factor in attracting two people to one another. How can valuing, honoring, and celebrating the strength that grows from our differences help to keep us from building relationship-destroying walls of separation? The passage also said one of the ways we help each other grow (in the church, and certainly in any family) is “speaking the truth in love.” Which do you find harder with those you love and are close to: speaking the truth at all, or doing so in love? What can help you grow toward maturity in both of those dimensions?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, make me the kind of partner who always speaks the truth, but who only speaks it in love. And help me to listen in that spirit as well as speak. Amen.

* Wright, N.T., *Paul for Everyone, The Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon* (The New Testament for Everyone) (p. 43). Westminster John Knox Press. Kindle Edition.

Prayer Requests – <https://cor.org/prayer> *Prayers of peace and comfort for:
As a church family, we care for and pray for one another.*

Please pray for our church family members who are serving in the military, and those listed below who have recently lost loved ones.

To **Cindy Budd** and family following the death of **Andrew Val Budd** (son), who died 4/10/2022.

To **Dana Harrison** and family following the death of **Edward J. Harrison** (dad), who died 4/28/2022.

To **Vicki Irey** and family following the death of **Michael Irey** (husband), who died 5/8/2022.

To **Nyla Marrero** and family following the death of **Timmy D. Baumgardner aka R.J. Scott** (dad), who died 4/30/2022.

To **Jan Mueller** and family following the death of **Robert 'Bob' Mueller** (husband), who died 5/5/2022.

To **Cheryl Rothgeb** and family following the death of **Bill Rothgeb** (husband), who died 5/6/2022.

To **David Williams** and family following the death of **Arthur Ross Williams** (dad), who died 4/22/2022.

To **Lois and Jim Williams** and family following the death of **Nicholas Lee Williams** (son), who died 4/28/2022.

If you would like prayer, please submit a prayer request [online](#), and our pastors and prayer team will pray for you.