

**GROW
IN
GRACE**
NEWSLETTER

Volume 44, No. 42, October 17, 2017 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter **is a weekly Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church; and is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

Psychology: the Study of the Soul (Part 7) FORGIVENESS!
Healing the Hurt We Never Deserved (Edited from Ray Pritchard **NOTE:** *I have recently shared this on Face Book; and with one with whom I am counseling. Last Tuesday I sensed that I should share it in the Newsletter.*

[IMPORTANT ADDITION: Here is a serious, common ROAD-BLOCK to forgiveness— NAMELY, that of being hurt, resentful, and/or bitter toward others when the real problem is that we ARE FALSELY ACCUSING OTHERS! MULTITUDES ARE IN BONDAGE because they do not focus on CONFESSING THEIR OWN sins— thus, they are prone to blindly IMAGINE wrong and/or misinterpret others; and then SPREAD their destructive stories under the guise of... "I've been hurt, neglected, and/or wronged. THE NEED FOR SUCH ONES is not to forgive others; but to repent of their own faults and be forgiven!]

QUOTE: "Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive!" There are two parts to that observation and both of them are important for us to think about:

1. FORGIVENESS IS A CHRISTIAN VIRTUE.

Consider these words from the lips of our LORD: “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven” (Luke 6:37).

“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6:14-15). The Apostle Paul said in Colossians 3:13: “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.

Forgive AS the Lord forgave you.”

There is another way to say it, and it comes from the “Love Chapter”— I Corinthians 13. While describing the greatest virtue, Paul declared that **“love ... keeps no record of wrongs”** (I Corinthians 13:5). That little phrase deserves a closer examination. **“Love ... doesn’t keep score of the sins of others.”**

Love doesn’t keep score! It finds a way to forgive the sins of others. JESUS MODELS and GIVES US the finest, purest, highest example of forgiveness.

When JESUS hung on the cross, condemned to death by evil men who plotted to murder Him, who produced lying witnesses to convict him, as He surveyed the howling mob assembled to cheer His suffering, Jesus the Son of God, the One who knew no sin, in His dying moments uttered words that still ring across the centuries: **“Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing!”** (Luke 23:34)

Those 11 words sweep away all our shabby excuses. They reveal the barrenness of our heart. Many of us say, *“If only the people who hurt me would show some remorse, some sorrow, then maybe I would forgive them.”* (We use that as an excuse to

continue in our bitterness, our anger, and our desire to get even!) **But consider Jesus on the cross!**

No one seemed very sorry. The crowd laughed, mocked, cheered, and jeered. Those who passed by hurled insults at him. They taunted him. *“If you are the King of Israel, come down from the cross and save yourself.”* **NO ONE SAID**, “I was wrong. This is a mistake. We were such fools.”

And YET JESUS PRAYED, *“Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.”* **That is precisely what we must PRAY if we are going to follow Jesus!** We must PRAY IT to GOD, our Father about people who hurt us deliberately and repeatedly; and PRAY IT to GOD about those who intentionally attack us; and PRAY it to GOD about those who casually and thoughtlessly wound us. **WE MUST pray it to GOD, our Father, about those closest to us, to our husband or wife, to our children, to our parents, to our friends, to our neighbors, to our brothers and sisters, to our fellow Christians.**

2. Forgiveness is difficult in part because we do not understand it properly.

At this point it is necessary to clear up some of the misconceptions about forgiveness. These misconceptions matter because sometimes when we say we can’t or won’t forgive, we are actually talking about something other than biblical forgiveness. **Let me list a few things forgiveness DOES NOT MEAN:**

It does not mean approving of what someone else did. **It does not mean** pretending that evil never took place. **It does not mean** making excuses for other people’s bad behavior.

It does not mean justifying evil so that sin somehow becomes less sinful. **It does not mean** overlooking abuse. **It does not mean** denying that others tried to hurt you repeatedly. **It does not mean** refusing to press charges when a crime has been

committed. **It does not mean** forgetting the wrong that was done. **It does not mean** pretending that you were never hurt. **It does not mean** that all negative consequences of sin are canceled.

Let me make an observation: It is quite possible to mouth kind words of forgiveness while harboring anger and bitterness within. So, let me suggest that forgiveness begins in the heart and then eventually works its way outward. **Forgiveness in its essence is a decision made on the inside to refuse to live in the past.**

It's a conscious choice to release others from their sins against you so that you can be set free. **It doesn't deny the pain or change the past,** but it does break the cycle of bitterness that binds you to the wounds of yesterday. **Forgiveness allows you to let go and move on. NOTE:**

You can forgive even when other people make no confession. **You can forgive when** the other person has done nothing to earn forgiveness because forgiveness is like salvation— it is a gift that is freely given, it cannot be earned. **You can forgive and** the other person may never even know about it. **You can forgive** without saying, "I forgive you" because forgiveness is a matter of the heart. That brings me back to the statement: "Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea until they have something to forgive." Then it becomes difficult.

Matthew 18:21-35— Jesus told a story, about a man who owed his boss a vast debt that in today's terms would be something like \$1 million. When the boss demanded his money, the man unashamedly begged to be forgiven. He even promised to pay the money back. But the boss forgave him the whole debt. Just wiped the slate clean. Soon after that, the man who had been forgiven such an enormous sum saw a fellow who owed him a tiny debt— something like \$100.

When the fellow couldn't pay, he had him thrown into jail. But people heard about it and told the boss who got angry and had the first man thrown into jail to be tortured until he paid back the amount that previously had been forgiven. **The King James Version says that he was turned over to the "tormentors."**

JESUS MADE A STUNNING APPLICATION: ***"This is how my Heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart!"*** (Matthew 18:35) **These words are for believers. Jesus said, "What happened to that man will happen to you unless you learn to forgive and forgive and forgive."** The tormentors will come and take you away and torture you. What tormentors you may ask?

The hidden tormentors of anger and bitterness that eat your insides out, **the tormentors** of frustration and malice that give you ulcers and high blood pressure and migraine headaches and lower back pain, **the tormentors** that make you lie awake at night on your bed stewing over every rotten thing that happens to you.

The tormentors of an unforgiving heart that stalk your trail day and night, that never leave your side, that suck every bit of joy from your life. **Why? Because you will not forgive from the heart. It is happening to you just as Jesus said because you refuse to forgive.**

We are like the unforgiving servant. We stand before Almighty God with our sins piled up like a mountain. The mountain is so tall we can't get over it, so deep we can't get under it, so wide we can't go around it. That's every one of us. Our sins are like a \$100 million dollar debt we could never pay in our lifetime or in a thousand lifetimes. We come as debtors to God, come with empty hands, and we say, "I cannot pay." God who is rich in mercy replies, "I forgive all your sins. My Son has paid the debt. You now owe me nothing."

Then we rise from the pew, leave the communion table, walk outside the church humming *“Lord, I Lift Your Name on High.”* And before we get to our car we see a man who has done us wrong and we want to grasp him by the throat and say, “Pay me right now!” No wonder we are so tormented. No wonder we are so angry and bitter. No wonder we have problems. No wonder our friendships don’t last. No wonder we can’t get along. We have never learned the secret of unlimited forgiveness. Verily, the hidden tormentors have done their work.

1) Forgiveness is not an optional part of the Christian life. It is a necessary part of what it means to be a Christian.

Let me suggest that one of the test as to whether the Holy Spirit has been poured out on you ...on us.... is our willingness and ability to forgive. ***Kindness, forgiveness, and a concern for lost souls is a true gauge of where we are in Christ.***

YOU CANNOT judge the spirituality of a Christian on the basis of (1) his **prayers**, since praying is often done for its effect on the listeners. Nor can you measure a person's spiritual status by (2) the loudness of his **"Amens"** and "Hallelujahs." (3) The **generosity of one's giving** is not an infallible test for it may be done for personal recognition or to ease one's conscience. (4) **Faithful attendance** at worship or participation in church programs...OR **TEACHING and PREACHING**— none of these are reliable either for they may all be done because of family, community, or peer pressures... or from responsibilities.

A sure test of the depth of our relationship with God is found in our willingness to show compassion and to forgive those who hurt us. If we are going to follow Jesus, we must forgive. We have no other choice!

“Forgiveness is the fragrance the violet gives to the heel that has crushed it!”

WE are never more like Jesus than when we forgive.

And we will never be set free until we forgive.

We need two things: SOFT HEARTS and HUMILITY:

Some of us have been deeply hurt by the things others have done to us. People have attacked us, maligned us, mistreated us, abused us, sexually assaulted us, ridiculed us, belittled us, publicly humiliated us, physically beaten us, and they have done it deliberately, repeatedly, viciously.

In response we chose to become hard on the inside to protect ourselves from any further pain. But that hardness has made it difficult for us to hear the gentle call of the Holy Spirit. **We need soft hearts to hear His voice.**

And then we need HUMILITY. Only the humble will forgive. Only as I am reminded of JESUS' FORGIVENESS of me will I have the HUMILITY to let go of the past. May God soften our hearts to hear the truth!

And may we walk in the steps of Jesus who humbled Himself all the way to death on the cross— MAY WE SO WALK, AS HE WALKED, SO AS TO do the hard thing and let go of our bitterness, give up our anger, turn away from our resentment, stop keeping score, and **enter into the miracle of total forgiveness!** (Article, edited from Ray Pritchard)

Grace to all in Christ! James Bell www.southsidegallatin.org

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

MONDAYS: Jail Ministry— First and Second Monday of each month at 7:30pm. Questions? Contact Mike Munday at 615-681-7533

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care Nursing Home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM.

WEDNESDAYS:

☐ **6:30pm— Children Ministry/activities;** ☐ 6:30pm— **Youth Activities and Bible Study— (Enter via double doors by gym)**

☐ **6:30pm— Wednesday CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE... (Enter via double doors by gym)** ... meet in Ladies Sunday School Room

***** LADIES BIBLE STUDY—** the Gospel of Luke, 11:14-26! ... Cindy Bell, teaching. **THE REMAINING MEETINGS FOR 2017: TUESDAYS, OCTOBER 31, and November 7... all @ 11:00am.**

Park at the **BACK** of church, come in **DOUBLE DOORS** under the **AWNING... Door UNLOCKED by 10:30am... locked back at 11:10am**

***** MEN:** EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! **(NEW Study, starting 10/21/17— HEBREWS 11:1-40— LIVING BY FAITH!)** AT THE back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning, walk forward! **Juice, coffee, Hardee's biscuits, & Donuts WAITING starting at 7:30am**

SUNDAY SERVICES OCTOBER 22, 29 —

****** October 22—**

9:30am - Sunday School

10:45am - Worship Service / **Noon MEAL**

5:30PM-7:30PM— FAITHFUL MEN,

16 Concepts of a New Testament

Church

****** October 29—**

9:30am - Sunday School

10:45am - Worship Service /// **NO MEAL**

6:00PM, FIFTH SUNDAY EVENING OF SCRIPTURES AND PRAISE! See Adam Troutt...

**WATCH and LISTEN to the Preaching of the Word of God!
AND share the LINK with others!**

http://www.southsidegallatin.org/Listen_to_other_sermons_on_sermonaudio/