

## Week Fourteen: "Forgiveness"

### Day One: "Be Kind and Compassionate"

**Read:** Ephesians 4:32

**Reflect:** What is held up more in our society - kindness or assertiveness?  
Are they (kindness and assertiveness) opposed to each other?

Can you give an example of someone being both assertive and kind?

**Dig:** In Ephesians 2:7 who is described as kind?

Did we deserve - in any way - this kindness? (See Ephesians 2:1-4).

When Jesus saw people, what did compassion help him to discern about their spiritual state? See Matthew 9:35-38.

What might compassion (literally "with - suffering") have to do with the next phrase in Ephesians 4:32 - a call to forgive others?

**Apply:** All of us lack the skills to live as forgiving people. We are not naturally kind and compassionate. So ask Jesus to give you his eyes today as you see those who cross your pathway. May you see with compassion.

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### Day Two: "Forgive Each Other"

**Read:** Ephesians 4:32

**Reflect:** Can we eventually count on the forgiveness of God if we don't forgive others?  
Why or why not?

**Dig:** How might the next verse, "be imitators of God, therefore..." be connected to the call to forgive?

According to Matthew 18:21-22, how often should we forgive others?

According to the point of Matthew 18: 23-34, will we ever forgive another person as much as God has forgiven us?

According to Matthew 18:35, will we be forgiven if we refuse to forgive others?

According to Matthew 6:14, is there a condition placed on God's continuing forgiveness of us?

**Apply:** Ask God to make you ready to forgive. Then pray this prayer:

Lord, I forgive \_\_\_\_\_ (person) for \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ (verbally express every hurt and pain the Lord

brings to your mind and how it made you feel).

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### **Day Three: "Just As"**

**Read: Ephesians 4:32**

**Reflect:** How (how often, how quickly, how completely) does God forgive you?

**Dig:** In the Greek this phrase is introduced by "kathos kai," which should be translated "just as, also." This phrase has been called "the conformity pattern." What exactly are we being called to conform to here?

According to Psalm 19:12, does God forgive sins we are not aware of?

Since we are to forgive "just as" God forgave us, should we forgive those not aware of their sin?

So, how should we approach forgiving others?

**Apply:** Ask God to work on your heart so that you forgive "just as" he forgave you.

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### **Day Four: "In Christ God Forgave You"**

**Read: Ephesians 4:32**

**Reflect:** Why did Christ have to die?

Why couldn't God just hit the "delete" button and forget about all our sins?

**Dig:** Notice that this text teaches clearly that God forgave us "in Christ."

Read Luke 7:36-50, paying close attention to verse 47. What is the connection between knowing how much you have sinned and loving and treasuring Jesus?

Read Romans 3:21-26:

According to verse 25, what kind of sacrifice did Jesus provide?

Atonement means to "pay restoration" or to "restore trust" and here means "to repair the honor of God."

According to verse 26, what did this atonement demonstrate?

What had God left unpunished? (See verse 25)

What is it about God's honor and reputation that Christ's sacrifice did to restore that honor - and forgive our sins?

**Apply:** Ask God for a deeper understanding of sin and so a deeper appreciation of the sacrifice of Christ and his forgiveness of our sins.

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### **Day Five: "Lectio Divina"**

**Read: Ephesians 4:32** "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Lectio divina (a Latin expression which means Sacred reading) is done in three stages:

- **reading:** you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness: after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.
- **meditation:** you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life: write down memories of events or conversations or other scripture passages.
- **prayer:** you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer -- thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.