

STUDY #1

FORGIVENESS



(based off sermon by Evan Bottomley on January 22, 2012)

notes

Scripture: Ephesians 4:17-32

¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. ¹⁹ They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. ²⁰ But that is not the way you learned Christ!— ²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to put off your old self,^[a] which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, ²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

²⁵ Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. ²⁶ Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and give no opportunity to the devil. ²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. ²⁹ Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Questions:

1. Think of a time when you have been really hurt by someone and have struggled to forgive. What makes forgiveness so hard?

2. Read Ephesians 4:17-32. Reread verse 32. What does Paul command?

STUDY #1: Forgiveness

notes **7. If sin means there is a debt incurred, what is forgiveness?**

8. Who pays the debt? How?

9. How is forgiveness different from excusing the sin? How do Matt. 18:15, Luke 17:3, and Eph. 4:25 contradict the notion that forgiveness means just excusing or “forgetting” the offense?

10. Read Eph. 4: 29-32. What practical advice do these verses give in terms of forgiveness?

11. Evan said in his sermon that we are only able to forgive through the power of the gospel? Do you agree? What has God given us to overcome a spirit of unforgiveness?

STUDY #1: Forgiveness

notes | Prayer Points

Break into small groups and confess to one another any areas in your life where you are struggling with unforgiveness.

Pray for one another: that God through His Spirit would enable us to understand more clearly the depth of our own sin and what is cost Him to bring us home.

Pray that God would enable us to extend grace and forgive as Christ has forgiven us. Also pray for individual needs.

Further Reading:

Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion & Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation*

Miroslav Volf, *Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a Culture Stripped of Grace*

¹
<http://theresurgence.com/2011/04/12/serving-each-other-through-forgiveness-and-reconciliation>

STUDY #1: Forgiveness

notes
