

The Grace Effect on Forgiveness

6-29-25

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Luke 17:1 "It is impossible that no offenses should come..."

Eph 4:32-5:2 ...be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you. ^{5:1} Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. ² Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

Col 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

I. What Forgiveness isn't (necessarily).

a. Downplaying the seriousness. (Prov 17:9; 10:12 19:11)

b. Forgiveness is Forgetting.

Matt 18:21-35 (parable of the unmerciful servant) Jesus commands a deliberate act of releasing a debt. Nowhere does He command amnesia—only mercy.

c. Forgiveness does not (necessarily) Trust.

d. Not (necessarily) Restoration of position.

e. Forgiveness does not (necessarily) mean Reunion.

Rom 12:18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

II. the Practice of Forgiveness:

a. Welcome the person back into “the circle of humanity.” Deliberately see the offender as more than the wrong they committed—another fallible, image-bearing human being.

b. Surrender our Right to get even.

Give up the inner claim to revenge or pay-back; entrust justice to God, the courts, or appropriate authorities instead of taking it in our own hands.

c. Over time Cultivate a hesitant but real goodwill—praying for the other’s ultimate good and refusing to re-weaponise the memory against them.

“When we begin to forgive, we feel a real, though reluctant, wish that some good might come that weasel’s way. The feeling of goodwill is likely to be weak and hesitant at the start, and we are almost bound to back-slide into malice along the way. But if we find any stirrings of benevolence inside us—any hint that it will be all right with us if some modest bit of good fortune comes our enemy’s way—then we can be sure that we have teamed with God in the modest miracle of healing.”

Lewis B. Smedes, *The Art of Forgiving: When You Need to Forgive and Don’t Know How* (New York: Random House, 1996), p. 10:

III. The Motivation:

The Grace Effect: “...just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”

Luke 18:9-14