

- After dealing with specific situations, Peter begins to address again Christians in general ... His focus remains the same – **ALLOWING THE SPIRIT OF GOD TO PRODUCE THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST IN US AND THROUGH US** ... As noted before, passage is connected to the warning Peter gives in [2:11](#) ... In the same mindset, Paul writes this in [Phi2:3-8](#) ... **THE STANDARD FOR OUR ATTITUDE AND CHARACTER IS CHRIST**
- We know what we're supposed to do ... But what we're supposed to do doesn't naturally work well for us ... In fact, we naturally tend to make a mess of things, particularly within our relationships with others ... Sometimes we do OK with people that we like and people that we get along with ... What about people we don't always get along with ... What about those who have wronged us ... How do we follow Peter's instruction within those relationships
  - Do we force ourselves ... Do we pretend ... Do we avoid them ... Do we justify for ourselves why we don't have to apply this scripture to certain people ... Do we qualify passages like this in ways that benefit us
- **All of you** in the church ... **BE WITH ONE ANOTHER, NOT AGAINST ONE ANOTHER** – [Ep4:3](#) ... Words describe **RELATIONSHIP** and **INTENTIONAL UNITY WITH ONE ANOTHER** ... The local church is to consist of people who gather as family members, not as individuals who gather every so often and go back to our own lives throughout the week ... This stands against our American culture – individualistic mindset and lifestyle ... But it's exactly what the NT is calling us to leave behind, because **you were called for this** ... The church is not supposed to look American ... We're supposed to take on the likeness, character, and representation of Christ
- Therefore, our relationships with one another will at times become messy, because you and I are messy people ... We're prone to hurting one another with our actions and words ... We're prone to making mistakes and disagreeing ... We're prone to selfishness and pride; we're prone to resentment and bitterness ... Yet, all of us are recipients of God's unconditional love, unrelenting grace, undeserving forgiveness and kindness – **AND THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING** ... **THE GOSPEL IS THE FOUNDATIONAL REMEDY FOR EVERY SIN THAT SEEKS TO DIVIDE EVERY RELATIONSHIP**
- How often do we allow ourselves to be offended by what people say and do ... How often do we allow our mind to harbor these offenses, so that they influence our attitude towards people and situations ... Holding onto offenses leads to hardness of heart, unforgiveness, judging others, anger, isolation, and division ... We may not readily see change in our attitude, but it doesn't mean it's not present ... This can cause us to live from a defensive position – ... From this posture, we can wrongly convince ourselves that we're right and everyone else is wrong ... We gather supporters to affirm us ... When actually, we're causing them to affirm our sin, and maybe even become entrapped
- The solution isn't to "fake-it" or "avoid-it" – **THE SOLUTION IS THE GOSPEL**, as Peter points to [\(v9\)](#) ... **Give blessing** points us back to the teaching of Jesus; even more to **THE CROSS OF JESUS** ... Loving others is not a duty of performance or merit ... It's an overflow of the gospel's work inside us [\[CHART\]](#) ... Gospel starts with God moving towards us ... He cancels our debt and opens to us reconciliation through Jesus ... His forgiveness is what we aim to mirror ... We take the initiative, whether we're the offended or offender (see [Mt5:23-24](#), [Lu6:27-42](#), [Ro12-15](#), [Ep4-5](#)) ... **WE REPENT IN FAITH AND RELY ON JESUS**
  - **Cross-Chart** ... By no means will this be easy ... Canceling a debt doesn't mean we excuse it ... Rather, we don't use it to seek revenge or allow fixable relationships to remain broken ... Forgiveness isn't always instantaneous, but it's vital to our life and relationships that we forgive one another and seek forgiveness from one another ... *"Forgiveness is costly. It means canceling a debt when we feel we have every right to demand payment. It means absorbing the pain, hurt, shame, and grief of someone's sin against us ... But this is exactly how God has acted towards us in Jesus Christ. And through the gospel, the Holy Spirit empowers us to do the same toward others,"* [Thune](#)
  - **THE GOSPEL IS THE FOUNDATIONAL REMEDY FOR EVERY SIN THAT SEEKS TO DIVIDE EVERY RELATIONSHIP**

The following chart is influenced by *The Gospel-Centered Life*, by Robert Thune and Will Walker, New Growth Press.  
 The Cross-Chart is from *The Gospel-Centered Life*, by Robert Thune and Will Walker, New Growth Press.

Purchase the book here – <https://newgrowthpress.com/small-group-study-resources/topical-bible-study-books/the-gospel-centered-life-study-guide-with-leaders-notes/>

_____ IS NOT A DUTY OF PERFORMANCE OR MERIT. _____ IS AN OVERFLOW OF THE GOSPEL'S WORK INSIDE ME.		
Loving one other	Loving my spouse	Loving Paul
Serving one other	Serving my neighbor	Serving Steve
Forgiving one other	Forgiving my co-worker	Forgiving Amy
Respecting one other	Respecting my boss	Respecting Jane

