

Weekly Devotions: LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER 18

Let Go of the Grudge

It is easier to love God than to love people. God does not lie to us; He doesn't harm or betray us. People do. To love one another with the love of God is to be willing to let go of the grudge and to forgive those who have wronged us. This is certainly not easy but we should not let the imperfections of others deter us from doing what God expects of us.

The church is a community of forgiven sinners; every believer is in the process of transformation to be like Christ. No one is perfect and we are bound to step on each other's toes. In all relationships, including those between fellow believers, we are bound to hurt others or be hurt by others. Agape love is to be ready to give and to receive forgiveness from one another. Our Lord Jesus taught us to pray; "Forgive us our sins, as we also forgive everyone who sins against us" (Luke 11: 4).

Read Luke 6: 27 – 38

Jesus expects us to be different from those who do not know His love and forgiveness. Our conduct, especially the way we respond to difficult people, must be distinctive because we are the recipients of God's grace and mercy. Instead of retaliating and returning evil for evil, we are to bless & to pray for our enemies. We are to refrain from judging, condemning and holding a grudge against others.

Gary Thomas in *Authentic Faith* wrote: "We forgive because we ourselves need to be forgiven. The New Testament makes clear that offering forgiveness to others is a Christian obligation... Retaliation and revenge are not for Christians; on the contrary, we should care for our enemies rather than seek their harm."

Questions to ponder

1. What did Jesus say about how we should respond to our enemies and those who take advantage of us in vv. 27-30? Which of these do you find most difficult to obey? Why do we struggle to forgive fellow believers in the church?
2. How are we to be different from those who are 'sinners' / unbelievers (32-34)? Why is it important for us to love even our enemies unconditionally (35-36)?
3. How do you 'bless those who curse you' (28)? What is one good thing you would do for that person in the church who has been most unkind to you?
4. What principles should guide our relationships with others (vv. 31 & 37) and how can you apply them in your relationships with difficult people in the church?

Prepared by Rosalind Chen