

Character Trait for October 18-24 is Forgiveness

Ephesians 5:1, "Therefore, be imitators of God"

CHARACTER: qualities built into our lives that determine our responses, regardless of circumstances.

Forgiveness: Clearing the record of those who have wronged me and not holding a grudge. Forgiveness involves restoring relationships by relinquishing our right to revenge.

Weekly Verse: Psalm 79:9 "Help us, God our Savior, for the glory of Your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for Your name's sake."

Bible Story: Genesis 45 represents the climax of the story of Joseph, and his forgiveness of his brothers.

Quote: Forgive others as quickly as you expect God to forgive you.

Leadership: John Maxwell reminds us that leadership develops daily, and not in a day. We need to make the decisions every day that help us develop into a leader. This may be difficult in a society such as ours where we want instant gratification.

Living in Community:

Forgiveness isn't a one-time event, but should become a practice that we live our lives around. The goal of living a life of forgiveness is to reconcile our relationships with others and to live in community with those around us. We can learn much about forgiveness through Bible stories such as the prodigal son and the man who was forgiven a large debt by his employer.

Application:

Remember that forgiveness is a conscious choice, and is not a feeling or emotional state. It is a deliberate decision. The act of forgiving is not easy for most of us. Our natural instinct is to recoil in self-protection when we've been injured, and to hold onto grudges and grievances. We don't naturally overflow with mercy, grace and understanding when we've been wronged, but must depend on the Holy Spirit working in our hearts to give us the strength we don't naturally have. We are to forgive others because He first forgave us, and the magnitude of what we have been forgiven far outweighs the magnitude of other's offenses toward us.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Can a person who is not a Christian forgive someone who has hurt them?
- 2) Do you think it is easier to forgive, or to ask for forgiveness?
- 3) Is it easier to forgive yourself or to forgive others?