

Character Trait for October 25-31 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: Matthew 6:12 "And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors."

Bible Story: John 21 tells the story of Jesus reconciling with Peter, and giving him three chances to offset his three denials of Jesus. Jesus not only forgave Peter, but restored their relationship.

Quote: The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong.

Leadership: John Maxwell often discusses the "law of the lid" as a means of determining a person's effectiveness in leadership. In short, this law means that your level of leadership is what determines how effective your group or organization can be. You are the lid, and no one can rise higher than your abilities. This is a sobering thought, that the way I exercise leadership may limit others and my entire organization.

Living in Community: Did you know that many snake bites are actually from dead snakes? People assume that the decapitated heads are safe to touch but they are as dangerous as a live snake. The same goes for harboring a hurt. Without forgiveness, you can still be bitten by the sting of bitter memories. Forgiveness for deep hurts is often a journey rather than an event. Forgiveness does not require remorse on the part of the offender. It is a gift. It can result in reconciliation with the offender but reconciliation is not required. Offering forgiveness only requires one person. What about the reverse of asking for forgiveness, of apologizing? When we offer sincere and heartfelt apologies, it allows the one we have hurt to see us differently.

Application: Justice is "taking personal responsibility to uphold what is pure, right, and true." When you forgive someone, you no longer seek personal retaliation, but you cannot release a person from moral responsibility. Someone who breaks a window may still bear responsibility to replace the window, even after receiving forgiveness.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Is there anyone I need to approach to ask for forgiveness for a wrong I have done to them?
- 2) How would you respond if you tried to forgive someone, and they told you they hadn't done anything wrong and didn't need to be forgiven?
- 3) Have you been involved in a situation in life where you have seen the "law of the lid" in action? Have you been the lid that keeps others from advancing beyond your level?