**Tips on Forgiveness**

The need to forgive is at the root of many issues such as anger, rejection, bitterness, abuse, addiction, depression, and so on. Forgiveness begins with the “will” and is not a feeling. Paul encourages us to love and forgive one another as Christ has forgiven us. In Ephesian 4:32, Paul says, “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another**, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” Even though we may understand the need to forgive others and ourselves and agree with the value of forgiveness, it still can be a challenge at times. Here are some tips to keep in mind when you find forgiving a challenge:

1. **Hurt people, hurt people** – It is important to keep in mind that people who are hurting hurt others. When a person is truly at peace and walking in the Spirit, they have no need to hurt or abuse others. Those who are led by the Spirit will show forth fruit of the Spirit, i.e., love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Ephesians 4:31-32 tells us to “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another**, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” When we understand that those who hurt, oppress, deceive, and abuse us are themselves wounded, it can help us to feel compassion towards them and pray for them.
2. **You are worthy of God’s forgiveness** – The Bible tells us that we all fall short of the glory of God. This is why Jesus died for us, so that our sins would be forgiven by his atoning blood shed on the cross. He took our punishment upon himself for our sins as the sinless sacrifice that pleased God. Hebrews 10:12 says, “But this man, after he had **offered one sacrifice for sins for ever**, sat down on the right hand of God.” Therefore, we are worthy of forgiveness only by the finished work of Jesus Christ. And, “in Christ” there is no condemnation to those who walk after the Spirit as we are told in Romans 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.” So, embrace God’s forgiveness in Christ and walk in the freedom Jesus purchased for you.
3. **Let go of the need for revenge** – God is both a loving God and a Righteous Judge who sees all things. Romans 14:12 tells us, “So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.” Paul, in Romans 12:19 says, “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, **Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord**.
4. **Forgiveness sets YOU free** – When we forgive others (and ourselves), our hearts are set free. By forgiving others (and ourselves), we are freed from the sin of unforgiveness. In Matthew 5:44 Jesus teaches us to love our enemies and to bless those who curse you. Remember what Jesus said in Luke 23:34 when he was being crucified, “Then said Jesus, Father, **forgive them**; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.” Let us have the heart of Christ and remember to pray for those who have hurt us.