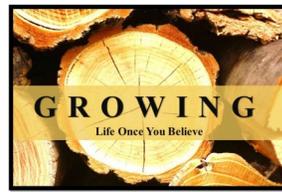


# FORGIVING'S FREEDOM

COL. 3:1-14; MAT. 18:21-35; LUKE 15:11-32



## Understanding Forgiveness

“Forgiving... is an art, a practical art, maybe the most neglected of all the healing arts.  
It is the art of healing inner wounds inflicted by other people’s wrongs.”  
~ Lewis Smedes

“My personal act to release the one who has sinned against me from my right to  
exact payment of his offence and myself from bitterness and resentment.”  
~ Gerry Breshears

Forgiveness is...

Forgiveness is not...

We forgive because...

“God calls us to obey Him, even when our hearts are not yet in alignment with Him...  
If you do what God asks you to do, He will do what you cannot do —  
He will change your heart.” ~ Rob Reimer

## Practicing Forgiveness

Forgiving happens in three stages...(Luke 15:11-32)

- 1) We rediscover the humanity of the person who hurt and wronged us
- 2) We surrender our right to get even
- 3) We revise our feelings toward the person we forgive

Choosing the journey to forgiveness...

“Forgiving is the key which unlocks the door of resentment  
and the handcuffs of bitterness..”  
~ Corrie ten Boom

## Going Deeper

(For individual or small groups to go deeper with the passage)

- Read Col. 3:1-14. Identify the statements or phrases that are facts/truths, past completed actions and ongoing actions.
- Fill in this blank: According to Col. 3:1-14, I am supposed to actively work at \_\_\_\_\_. Fill in as many responses as you can find. What are the reasons you have to work at these?
- Lewis Smedes writes, “Forgiveness happens when we rediscover the humanity of the person who hurt us, surrender our right to get even, and revise our feelings toward the person we forgive” (The Art of Forgiving). What correlations do you see between Paul’s clothing metaphor (Col. 3:12-14) and Smedes’ understanding of forgiving?
- Is forgiving something you will yourself to do or must you feel like it? How do you discern when to “forebear” and when to “forgive”?
- Spiritual Exercise: In a time of prayer, read either the prodigal son story (Luke 15:11-32) or the unforgiving servant story (Mat. 18:21-35). Reflect on one of those passages and let the Holy Spirit impress the love and grace of God upon your heart. Is there someone you need to begin the heart work of forgiving? How will you start this work this week?