

Forgiveness is a difficult thing that gets easier as we train for it. It would not be advisable to run a marathon if we had not prepared beforehand. The same is true with forgiveness: start with where you are and move forward. Soooooo..... who in your life are you holding a grudge against right now? Keep them in mind as you pray this week.

MONDAY: Read Luke 7:39-50. This text, along with the small parable Jesus tells within it are difficult to hear. So, what is the big deal if someone does something nice for someone else? If she hasn't expressed any sorrow for her sins, can she be forgiven? Guess so, according to Jesus. Did the thief crucified with Jesus offer remorse for his sins? Read Luke 23:36-43. Are you withholding forgiveness because someone hasn't expressed their sorrow? How long will you carry that burden?

TUESDAY: Read Colossians 3:12-17. Paul paints us a picture of what it means to live a life of faith. Our focus this week is on forgiveness. Paul's characterization doesn't come about for us if we hold out on forgiving. What characteristics in verses 12 & 13 are the most difficult for you? The peace that passes understanding (Philippians 4:21) is birthed from our forgiving way of life. Who can you pray for today for such peace to come to them? Call at least one person today you have not heard from in a long time and check on them.

WEDNESDAY: Read Psalm 103. This is a song of rejoicing and central to the rejoicing is that God 'pardons all our iniquities'. Does anything keep you from rejoicing in God's gracious forgiveness? Read Matthew 6:14-15. Here is how Eugene Peterson puts those verses in his 'Message' paraphrase. "In prayer there is a connection between what God does and what you do. You can't get forgiveness from God, for instance, without also forgiving others. If you refuse to do your part, you cut yourself off from God's part." So, what is the forgiveness impediment for you? How much longer will you hold on to it?

THURSDAY: God goes first to pave the way for us. Read Jeremiah 31:31-34. This new covenant isn't dependent on our response but solely on God's. God is willing to take the chance that we will not do likewise. Read John 3:16-17. Again, it isn't about us, but it is for us. Read Matthew 26:27-28. God wants us to live in forgiveness. Is there anything that you are still beating yourself up for? Are you holding off receiving God's forgiveness? Take time today to confess what is stirring in your soul. God already knows; the confession is for us.

FRIDAY: Read 2 Corinthians 5:16-21. Paul tells us of our ministry; The Ministry of Reconciliation. We are all on God's team to convince the world that God is real and does love and forgive. We are ambassadors (v. 20) for the cause, and the core of our message is that God, through Christ, did not count our 'trespasses' against us (v. 19). How can you help someone be reconciled to God today? God is able to use your efforts in reconciliation along with other things we may never know about to break down the wall people put up. How will you help today?