

The Monthly Ministry Focus: September 2024

A Moment of Scripture Focus for Every Ministry in First Baptist Church



To Ministry Leader: Please read or have this scripture read at your monthly meeting /activity/rehearsal.

SCRIPTURE FOCUS FOR THIS MONTH

Ephesians 4:31-32: “Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”



Forgive. What a loaded word. Our Christian faith is rooted in the principle of forgiveness. However, we all have experiences that seem to tear out our very fabric when we are asked to forgive. Consider the following examples: a close relative hurts you by saying or doing something; a close friend betrays your trust; a person at work or school starts an inaccurate rumor about you; or your spouse dishonors your marriage. These examples cause bitterness, wrath, and anger, which are natural hurt feelings. Yet, we are called to forgive.

What is important to consider is that forgiveness is God's action and requires a true reliance on the aid of the Holy Spirit. What is more important is that we must not feel like we are wrong for feeling hurt, angry, or bitter. We are human and, therefore, are not immune to human feelings. We don't have to deny being hurt, angry, or bitter; we must ask God to help us to cope with these feelings in a healthy manner. We can let the individual know who hurt us that we forgive them, but rebuilding trust in the relationship will take time.

Another essential aspect is understanding that forgiving does not mean releasing a person from being accountable for the hurt. God forgives us but still asks us to be accountable for the sin by acknowledging the sin. This concept is repentance. Our part in forgiving is to release our hurt, anger, and pain over to God and ask God to do God's will in addressing the relationship that has been impacted. So, being kind or tenderhearted does not mean allowing yourself to reside in the same place as the person or persons who hurt you if the person continues to cause you harm mentally, physically, or spiritually. *It means you love them, even if it means being apart from them until God heals you. But just as God never leaves us nor forsakes us, we must continue to ask God to help restore the relationship in God's time and way.*

