

Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

Vision Sunday: Closer/Further - Part 4

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Introduction

Jesus taught His disciples and now us to include in our prayers, “forgive us our sins as we have forgiven those who sin against us”. We all agree that this is a noble thing to do -- until we are personally called to put it into practise. The story of Leila Abdallah (see attachment) may be an extreme example of forgiveness, but Jesus said to Peter that we should continue to forgive for seventy times seven (Matthew 18:21-22). Jesus was not being technical -- rather, He was being hyperbolic. There actually is no edge to forgiveness. Forgiveness starts with each one of us

Bible Passage

Matthew 18:21-35

Discussion

1. How do you see God's forgiveness according to the parable you just read? If you were to put yourself in the first servant's shoes, would you think that what the master did at the end was fair? Where do you think fairness lies when it comes to forgiveness?
2. Jesus died on the cross to 'pay our debt' for sin. What does this mean to you personally (consider Romans 6:23)? Knowing this, do you think 'fairness' still has a place when you're weighing whether or not to forgive someone? What could hinder us from forgiving another?
3. Ps Dale said “for you to forgive is for you to let go.” What are the things that we have to let go of? If you are currently in the midst of extending forgiveness, what do you have to let go of now?
4. Read Luke 6:28 and 6:37. What do we need to do for those who mistreat us? What does the Bible say will happen if we don't do these things? How do we make this practice becomes habitual rather than occasional?

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5. Read Romans 12:17-18. Forgiveness is an action of your will and it does not depend on the perpetrator. Why can this become a challenge when we base it on our emotions? What about forgiving yourself? Do you have disappointments in yourself that you still carry? What can you do with this?

Respond

“Further” is where we will go when we are willing to offer another person forgiveness. Understanding God’s forgiveness of our sin breaks the chain of bitterness and disappointment that can bind us. It is a process of healing and it will take time. Here’s the good news: God’s forgiveness is given to you when you declare that He is your Lord and Saviour. Consider what would happen to you if He had not died on the cross (Romans 6:23). The ball is now in your court. Do you want to forgive others? Share in groups of two or three whether this is an area that you are struggling with, and hold each other in prayer.

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Attachment: Leia Abdallah's Statement to media

On Saturday the 1st of February 2020 at approximately 7.50 pm, our entire world came crumbling down with the senseless loss of three of our six children, Antony, Angelina and Sienna.

A fourth child was also killed; our cousin Bridget Sakr's daughter, Veronique.

To begin to encapsulate or express the heart-wrenching pain and sorrow we are experiencing in this time would require endless words of despair. This is an unimaginable tragedy; unfathomable beyond all description.

Our children are our reason for living. Bringing them up in accordance with the ways of God, teaching them to love, affording them every opportunity and nurturing them into positive and impacting young men and women was and is our life's purpose.

What is life without your children? How and where do we begin to pick up the pieces so that we may be effective parents to our three remaining angels? We start with forgiveness.

We forgive the driver that killed our innocent children. His actions will be met before the earthly and heavenly judge. We have decided, in our hearts to forgive him – for our sake, for the sake of our children and more so for Christ's sake.

Our faith in Jesus Christ remains the foundation of our family and we believe it will continue to help us through this difficult time. Each day that passes is a day closer to the day we are reunited with our angels. We will look toward this moment; not backwards at yesterday's pain.

As we've tried to make sense of the past week, the world too has been shaken by this mortifying event. It is our hope that through this, all will know that no matter the pain or despair, God will be a safeguard through this dark valley. He is in control, and eternity sits in the palm of His divine hand.

Our life here on earth is but a vapour in comparison to His eternal plans, and the purpose God holds for His children.

We would like to thank our family, our friends, our community, and so many others from across Australia and the world, for the overwhelming support we have received.

We are humbled and strengthened by the outpouring of love from each and every one of you.

Please continue to join us in prayer during this time. This is a very heavy cross that we've been chosen to carry, but it is through God's love that we keep going.

May the Peace of God through Jesus Christ be with us all.