

## *Discipleship Lesson 16*

# **Relationships**

*Key Memory Verse:*

*And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ also forgave you.*

*Ephesians 4:32*



# **Discipleship Lesson 16**

## **Relationships**

As you study this lesson you will understand why the following statements are **not true**.

1. My fellowship should only be with Christians with whom I totally agree.
2. When someone offends me they should make the first move in reconciliation.
3. I should only forgive someone if I truly feel like it in my heart.
4. When I have sinned against somebody, I just need to say "I apologize," and that is good enough.

### **As a Christian, How Do I Relate to Those Around Me Who Are Saved or Unsaved?**

This is a very important lesson, because if we are to enjoy a church family that loves and cares for each other, we must know how to build good relationships.

### **Purpose**

Your relationships in life determine your true happiness. The purpose of this lesson is to help Christians build new relationships and understand how to restore broken ones.

## I. What Is Fellowship?

A. **Fellowship** is a term commonly used by Christians, generally referring to getting together for activities or times of sharing common interests; however, this is only a small part of true fellowship. It is true that to fellowship is to share things, but true biblical fellowship goes far beyond just a meal or activity. It is the sharing of life through the person of the Lord Jesus Christ with another believer.

B. What do the following verses describe as the essentials for true fellowship?

1. Galatians 5:14

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2. Ephesians 4:25

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3. Philippians 2:3–8

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4. Hebrews 13:1–2; Titus 1:8

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C. Before we can have true fellowship with other believers, we must learn to have fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ. Note 1 John 1:3–7.

How do we maintain this fellowship? See 1 John 1:9.

D. We should have fellowship and spend time with one another as believers. However, Proverbs 25:17 (paraphrased) gives us some practical advice. “Don’t visit your neighbor too often, or you will wear out your welcome.”

Are you currently involved in biblical fellowship with other believers? List these areas and be prepared to discuss them with your discipler. Your discipler may know of a number of additional areas where you could become involved in fellowship.

## Notes and Questions



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## II. What Can I Expect from the World?

- A. You will be opposed by the world because \_\_\_\_\_ was opposed (John 15:18–21).
- B. You will only be opposed by the world if you \_\_\_\_\_ for Him. If you go along with the world, you will not be opposed (2 Timothy 3:12).
- C. Your primary opposition may come from:
  - 1. Your very own \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 10:35–37).
  - 2. From unsaved people in general. The two spiritual families have never gotten along and never will (Galatians 4:29).
  - 3. From society in general. The nature and course of the present world system is against God. This opposition is communicated through the media (literature, TV, radio, Internet, etc). These things you must discern carefully through the Word of God (1 John 2:15–17; Philippians 4:8).
- D. The mastermind behind this opposition is Satan.
  - 1. He is your \_\_\_\_\_ (1 Peter 5:8).
  - 2. How can we gain victory over the Devil? See 1 Peter 5:9.

What does this mean? (Review Lesson 7, Section III.)

### III. How Can I Overcome This Opposition and Maintain a Good Relationship with Jesus Christ?

- A. Give a \_\_\_\_\_ answer. Avoid fights whenever possible (Proverbs 15:1).
- B. Please God with your life, and He will give you peace, even with your \_\_\_\_\_ (Proverbs 16:7).
- C. By having a strong \_\_\_\_\_ in God (1 John 5:4-5).
- D. Love your enemies and help them. Even though He didn't have to, Jesus Christ loved His enemies and died for them. The world cannot understand this kind of love, and those who are seeking the truth will be drawn to it (Romans 12:14, 17-21).
- E. \_\_\_\_\_ for your enemies with pure motives (Matthew 5:44).
- F. Keep good \_\_\_\_\_. Associate with people who love God and want to serve Him (1 Corinthians 15:33).

Please understand that our main purpose in having relationships or friendships with the unsaved is to demonstrate the love of Christ and fulfill our responsibility to share the gospel with them. But, we must be aware of the negative influence that they can have on us (1 Corinthians 5:9-13).

### Notes and Questions

#### **IV. What Should Be My Attitude toward People Who Have Offended Me?**

A. The key to understanding forgiveness is found in Ephesians 4:32.

If we are going to practice forgiveness, we must understand all that was involved in Christ's forgiving us. We must remember that it was our sin and guilt that put Jesus Christ on the cross in the first place. We bear responsibility for His death just as surely as those who actually drove the nails through His hands and feet.

The forgiveness that Jesus extended on the cross to those who put Him to death is the same forgiveness that He extends to us today. Jesus then commands us as believers to extend that forgiveness to others. What a high standard He has set before us to give mercy even as we have received mercy.

Since God commands us to forgive others, refusing to do so is an act of direct disobedience against Him. Let me say it more plainly: refusing to forgive is a sin that reveals an unthankful heart for your own forgiveness.

We reflect the character of God when we forgive. To purposely not grant forgiveness is in direct opposition to everything Jesus did when He died.

B. What is forgiveness?

1. It is not using the words "I apologize." Those words are found nowhere in the Bible. They represent the world's unsatisfactory substitute for forgiveness.
2. Biblical forgiveness is not based upon a feeling. Our forgiveness is to be modeled after God's forgiveness. God did not forgive us because of an emotion. (John 3:16)
3. When God forgives, He goes on record and says so. Read Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:34b; Psalm 103:12; Micah 7:19.

What do these verses say that God will do if we ask forgiveness?

4. God made a promise not to bring up our sins again. He did not say that He forgot our sins; He says He won't \_\_\_\_\_ our sins. That is not the same thing as forgetting them (Jeremiah 31:34).

C. What shall I do when someone hurts, offends, or sins against me? See Luke 17:3; Matthew 18:15.

1. Instead of resolving the sin and conflict, what do some people do instead?
2. In what spirit are we to go and rebuke someone? See Galatians 6:1.

D. What does Luke 17:3–4 say I am to do if the person asks for forgiveness?

1. What if I don't feel like granting forgiveness? God doesn't want me to be a hypocrite, does He? If I forgive someone when I don't feel like doing so, won't I be a hypocrite? **Remember this: forgiveness is a promise and you can make a promise whether you feel like it or not.**
2. Refusal to forgive is a decision for vengeance. It is an attempt to do God's work yourself. God said, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay" (Romans 12:19). Bringing up sins of the past only reveals my hurts and my desire to hurt others.

E. If you have been deeply hurt by someone in the past, you need to learn from the life of Joseph. Read Genesis 50:15–21.

1. What was the key to Joseph's forgiveness? See verse 20.
2. Before Joseph's brothers ever asked for forgiveness, Joseph had already forgiven them in his heart, yet his brothers needed to ask his forgiveness to properly restore their relationship with Joseph and with God.



## Notes and Questions:

- F. If you choose not to forgive someone who has sinned against you, how will this affect your worship and relationship to God? Note Matthew 5:23–24; Mark 11:25.

Read Matthew 18:21–35. How does God treat this sin of unforgiveness? Note verse 32–35.

## V. Some Questions about Forgiveness

1. Do you have to go and confront a brother about every minor offense? See Proverbs 10:12, 17:9, 19:11; 1 Peter 4:8.
2. Does forgiveness remove all the consequences? Read 2 Samuel 12:13–14.
3. How did Paul handle Peter's hypocrisy? Galatians 2:11–14, key verse: 14. Do you think this was easy?

## VI. Practical Application

- A. How have your attitudes changed in regard to your relationships due to this lesson? Be specific.
- B. Are there people who have hurt you in the past with whom you need to practice biblical forgiveness?
- C. Name two important truths or principles that stood out to you from this lesson.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_