

Food for Thought

For the week of March 17, 2013

(Questions and Scriptures for further personal study)

1. Remembering our need for forgiveness and God's incredible provision of it will help us become generous in our forgiveness of others. The following verses take us back to the basics. Stop and reflect on each passage and underline any key principles. How does each passage help you grow in your ability or motivation to forgive?

Isaiah 53:6

Isaiah 59:1-3

Isaiah 55:6-7

Colossians 3:12-15

2. Forgiveness is not just about letting others off the hook and letting it go when we are wronged. It's also about freeing ourselves from the baggage that we pick up if we don't forgive. Read Ephesians 4:30-31. Do you see any evidence or symptoms of a lack of forgiveness in your own life toward others or yourself?

3. We heard this weekend that we are to let God bring about justice, and not seek our own revenge. That's easy to say, but hard to do because it can leave us feeling like the other person got away with it. In the following verses, what can we learn from David about not seeking our own revenge and allowing God's justice to happen?

1 Samuel 24:1-13

Psalms 139:17-24

What is the most challenging aspect for you when it comes to not seeking your own justice or revenge?

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Isaiah 53:6

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all. [NIV]

Isaiah 59:1-3

Sin, Confession and Redemption

1 Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save,
nor his ear too dull to hear.

2 But your iniquities have separated
you from your God;

your sins have hidden his face from you,
so that he will not hear.

3 For your hands are stained with blood,
your fingers with guilt.

Your lips have spoken falsely,
and your tongue mutters wicked things. [NIV]

Isaiah 55:6-7

6 Seek the Lord while he may be found;
call on him while he is near.

7 Let the wicked forsake their ways
and the unrighteous their thoughts.

Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will freely pardon. [NIV]

Colossians 3:12-15

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. [NIV]

2. Forgiveness is not just about letting others off the hook and letting it go when we are wronged. It's also about freeing ourselves from the baggage that we pick up if we don't forgive. Read Ephesians 4:30-31. Do you see any evidence or symptoms of a lack of forgiveness in your own life toward others or yourself?

Ephesians 4:30-31

30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. [NIV]

3. We heard this weekend that we are to let God bring about justice, and not seek our own revenge. That's easy to say, but hard to do because it can leave us feeling like the other person got away with it. In the following verses, what can we learn from David about not seeking our own revenge and allowing God's justice to happen?

1 Samuel 24:1-13

David Spares Saul's Life

1 After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi." 2 So Saul took three thousand able young men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the Wild Goats.

3 He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. 4 The men said, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

5 Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. 6 He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord." 7 With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.

8 Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. 9 He said to Saul, "Why do you listen when men say, 'David is bent on harming you'? 10 This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, 'I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the Lord's anointed.'" 11 See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. 12 May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. 13 As the old saying goes, 'From evildoers come evil deeds,' so my hand will not touch you. [NIV]

Psalms 139:17-24

17 How precious to me are your thoughts, God!

How vast is the sum of them!

18 Were I to count them,

they would outnumber the grains of sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.

19 If only you, God, would slay the wicked!

Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!

20 They speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name.

21 Do I not hate those who hate you, Lord,
and abhor those who are in rebellion against you?

22 I have nothing but hatred for them;
I count them my enemies.

23 Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

24 See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting. [NIV]

What is the most challenging aspect for you when it comes to not seeking your own justice or revenge?