

## Ephesians Devotional Guide – Part 2

### **Exercise #1**

In Ephesians 1:7 Paul says that in Christ “we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins....” As you ponder the God’s forgiveness, pray the following prayer from Psalm 139:23-24: “Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

Perhaps you are challenged with forgiving yourself or forgiving others. Read and reflect upon the statements below and invite God to soften your heart.

#### *Concerning forgiving ourselves:*

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. (Romans 8:1)

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. (Jesus in John 8:36)

I think that if God forgives us we must forgive ourselves. Otherwise it is almost like setting up ourselves as a higher tribunal than Him. (C.S. Lewis)

We accept ourselves as forgiven and as righteous because that is what God Himself declares us to be. To think otherwise is not a sign of humility but of arrogance because to think otherwise is to put our own judgment above God’s Word and to belittle the redemption price paid for us by His own beloved Son. (John MacArthur)

#### *Concerning forgiving others:*

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Ephesians 4:32)

Let us go to Calvary to learn how we may be forgiven. And let us linger there to learn how to forgive. (Charles Spurgeon)

### **Exercise #2**

In Ephesians 1:8 we learned that grace has been lavished upon us. Consider the effect that this should have upon your relationships with others. Do some self- evaluation and ask yourself: Do you enjoy pointing out the sins of others? Do you enjoy sharing with others evidences of God's work that you see happening in their lives? Ask God to expose to you ways that you have been *a sin detective* and invite Him to make you *a grace detective*.

### **Exercise #3**

Meditate upon the following from Dietrich Bonhoeffer:

*It is the grace of the gospel which is so hard for the pious to understand, that it confronts us with the truth and says: You are a sinner, a great and desperate sinner; now come, as the sinner that you are, to God who loves you. He wants you as you are; He does not want anything from you, a sacrifice, a work; He wants you alone. "My son, give me thine heart" (Prov23:26). God has come to you to save the sinner. Be glad! This message is liberation through truth.....You do not have to go on lying to yourself and your brothers, as if you were without sin; you can dare to be a sinner."*

How are you challenged by this statement? How are you encouraged? What does Bonhoeffer mean when he says: "you can dare to be sinner"? Examine your heart and confess ways you may be pretending to be someone you are not and thank God for His unconditional love. Also consider: Are there people in your life with whom you can honestly share your sins and struggles? If not, begin asking God for brothers and sisters who can walk with you in the battle against sin.

### **Exercise #4**

Continue to mediate on Ephesians 1:1-14. For our upcoming worship gathering especially give attention to verses 11-14. Consider the ministry of the Holy Spirit and His role in fulfilling the purpose of God described in this whole section.