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Practicing the 'F' Word

Many people summarise The Ten Commandments as, "do to others as you would have done to yourself". We all like to be forgiven for things we do wrong and regret. But how good are we at forgiving other people? Perhaps there is something to learn from how we would like to be forgiven, so that we can forgive others.

To begin with, it is worth recognising what real forgiveness is not. It is not:

- Condoning, excusing or justifying what someone has done
- Trivialising the offence or pretending it didn't happen
- Denying, ignoring or forgetting the offence

On the contrary, true forgiveness involves:

- Recognising the full extent of the offence
- Accepting how the other person feels about it
- Refusing to keep a record of the offence

If this is how we need to be forgiven, how can we "do to others as we would have done to ourselves"?

St Paul said, "Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (Col 3:13). So, is there something in the way Jesus offers us forgiveness that can help us learn how to forgive others? Jesus taught us to pray, "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us." (Luke 11: 4). Grace is undeserved forgiveness. If we have truly experienced God's forgiveness by being truly sorry to Him and accepting the forgiveness Jesus offers, then we can draw on that well of grace to offer forgiveness to others. In this way we can forgive others as God forgave us.

Thank God that Jesus died so that we might receive His forgiveness – and learn how to forgive others.

If you would like to know more about God's forgiveness, come to the [Alpha Course at the United Reformed Church](#) this autumn; contact Brian Blogg 01730 710365