

AN INVITATION TO A JOURNEY



SMALL GROUP GUIDE



HOW DID IT GO? (10 MINUTES)

Reaching Upward: Growing in Your Relationship with God

- If you are more prone to be patient than to persevere, did you pray for God to show you an area of your life in which you can add Christlike perseverance to your patience?
- If you are more prone to persevere than to be patient, did you pray for God to show you an area of your life in which you can add Christlike patience to your perseverance?

Investing in Your Neighbors

- If you have neglected a relationship because of the patience it requires, did you take a concrete step this week in Christ's power to persevere in that relationship?
- If your perseverance in a relationship has come at the cost of your patience, did you take a concrete step this week in Christ's power to demonstrate patience with that person?
- Any other way God stirred you to put this passage into practice?

Scripture Passages

Colossians 3:12-14 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Luke 22:32-34 but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers." 33 Peter said to him, "Lord, I am ready to go with you both to prison and to death." 34 Jesus said, "I tell you, Peter, the rooster will not crow this day, until you deny three times that you know me."

HEAD (15-20 MINUTES)

Read aloud the passages for this week.

1. In Colossians 3:12, what is Paul's purpose in first stating who they are, "God's chosen ones, holy and beloved...?"
2. Verse 12 can also be translated to begin with 'Therefore.' Looking at the preceding verse connected to this command, how does 'Therefore' enhance the meaning?
3. Looking at both of our Scripture passages, what is the significance of the acknowledgement that there are and will be conflict, complaints, and failures in Christ-followers? How did Christ model the ideal attitude for us? Where do you see hope and redemption communicated?

OCTOBER 17

SERMON TITLE:

Love & Forbearance

SCRIPTURE:

Colossians 3:12-14

Luke 22:32-34

Head

Observe the text and the author's main points.

HEART (15-20 MINUTES)

1. Our only opportunity to show forbearance and forgiveness comes when we are provoked or sinned against. How would we perceive difficult people and aggravating situations differently if we saw these as opportunities to show faithfulness in imitating Christ?
2. Paul was speaking to Christians who were being pressured by their culture to behave in ways contrary to Christ's teaching. *In what ways is Paul's command countercultural for us today? Share specific examples. Why is it vital that we follow the leading of and truth found in God's Word over the world's values?*
3. 'Forbearance,' or bearing with one another, can mean to show self-restraint, to be merciful, and/or to give up our right to something owed. There is a cost in forbearing. *What might we have to surrender in order to bear with and forgive one another? How does remembering God's forgiveness and mercy towards us help us in this regard? Consider sharing a personal example where you have (or, in hindsight, have not) done this.*

HANDS (10 MINUTES)

Reaching Upward: Growing in Your Relationship with God

- Ask the Holy Spirit to show you where you are struggling with forbearance and forgiveness. Ask Him to show you what is keeping you from it (pride? hurt? fear? lack of understanding? a spirit of offense?) so that you might confess, repent, and allow Him to help you grow in this area.
- First responders know how to react in a crisis because they have trained and prepared ahead of time. For spiritual challenges, a faithful prayer life is part of good preparation. Each day, pray for the Holy Spirit to prepare your heart, especially when you know you are going to be in a difficult situation. Pray for a right spirit and to be sensitive to His leading, so that when you are confronted with conflict, offense, or hurt, the Holy Spirit will have prepared your heart to respond well.
- Give thanks and remember God's forgiveness and unconditional love for you. Meditate on this good news that transforms our hearts.

Reaching Outward: Investing in Your Neighbors

- Think of those to whom it is hard for you to show love. Pray for your own heart towards them, for help to know how best to show them love, and for strength to put it into practice. Pray for them, for whatever they are struggling with and that they would find freedom in Christ.
- Take a good look at all your communications, such as social media, emails, and conversations. Strive to exercise forbearance and grace. Practice being a faithful witness in your interactions with others.
- In our journey, God calls us to set "memorial stones" so that we can remember and encourage each other concerning His faithfulness. Share about a time that you saw the good fruit that came from showing (or receiving) godly love in the form of forbearance and forgiveness. Share a testimony of forgiveness and forbearance that impacted your own faith.

Reaching Beyond

- Any other way God is stirring you to put this passage into practice?

▶ Heart

Envision how the text—when applied—might transform your inner life in terms of your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.

▶ Hands

Apply the text by moving from inward reflection to outward action looking for practical ways to live the text out in our lives to serve others.

▶ Neighbor

Anyone in your life—whether a friend, colleague, family member, classmate, or literal neighbor—to whom you can show God's love.

