



February 2009

Monthly Character e-Bulletin

Building Communities of Character

Forgiveness (vs. rejection)

The act of pardoning somebody for a mistake or wrongdoing and not holding a grudge is the dictionary's definition of forgiveness.

Easy to read, but not always easy to do. For-giving others sometimes tends to cause us anxiety... we may feel the other person doesn't deserve to be forgiven. Likewise, we may feel vulnerable and question whether or not forgiving also means the relationship should be unconditionally restored.

When we research the meaning of forgiveness we discover that some of the synonyms for this word are "freedom, liberty, and mercy"....

Interestingly, forgiveness can be a paradox when viewed in the context of personal offenses and these synonyms. When a person decides to extend forgiveness to another for doing wrong, the person

that walks away in liberty isn't the one who has been forgiven. Instead, the person extending mercy, the one doing the forgiving, is the one who walks in true freedom.

Even though this seems up-side-down, it isn't. It is simply a truth, sort of like how the law of gravity is a truth that holds us, whether we understand it or not.

We can choose to walk in this truth of forgiveness by understanding several things. First, we don't have to be a "victim" of other people's offenses, which is what happens when we allow hurts to take root in us. Second, we can realize that even "we" sometimes offend others, *and* hope to be forgiven. Third, sometimes people do hurtful things because they are hurt, not because they have set out to be hurtful. And lastly (for this list), sometimes "stuff" just happens, life happens.

Simply put, many times things just "are" and hurtful situations occur. Yet, we all have the power to choose whether or not we walk in the liberty of forgiveness.



This month, commit to:

- Be quick to forgive
- Not cover up my own wrongs but will be quick to ask forgiveness
- Not seek revenge
- Respond kindly to those who hurt me
- Not take up offenses for others

V isions of Character

*We never come to the end of needing forgiveness or needing to forgive.
- unknown*

For more information visit the Prattville Autauga Character Coalition website at www.pacharacter.org

The mission of Prattville-Autauga Character Coalition is to strengthen our communities by promoting excellence in character for each citizen.