

Character Trait for October 1-5 is Forgiveness

Ephesians 5:1, "Therefore, be imitators of God"

CHARACTER: qualities built into our lives that determine our responses, regardless of circumstances.

Forgiveness: Clearing the record of those who have wronged me and not holding a grudge. Forgiveness involves restoring relationships by relinquishing our right to revenge.

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

Bible Story: Acts chapter 7 tells us the story of Stephen and his martyrdom. The chapter itself is lengthy (60 verses), but the gist of the encounter can be found in Acts 7:54-60.

Quote: "Forgiveness does not change the past, but it will change the future."

Leadership: Forgiveness has been described as the least understood leadership trait, and is beginning to be recognized (even in secular companies) as an important part of the workplace. Forgiveness restores hope and productivity in the workplace, while not forgiving creates division. Abraham Lincoln provides a great example of an historical leader who preached and practiced forgiveness, even of his enemies.

Living in Community: There is a shortage of high school sports officials in every state, mainly due to the treatment that they receive from fans and coaches. This month we will focus on what we can do at Valley Christian to be different. As Christians, we are called to a higher standard when it comes to our behavior on and off campus.

Application: Forgiveness is more than just saying, "I'm sorry". I should be able to:

1. **Admit** what I did was wrong. I need to be specific about what I did. "I said some mean things about you to our other friends when you weren't there."
2. **Apologize** for how my choice affected the other person. "I'm sorry that I hurt your feelings by doing that. Will you forgive me?"
3. **Ask** what I can do to make it up to the person. "I know I can't undo what I did. I will talk to our friends and tell them what I said wasn't true, or something else if you'd rather."
4. **Alter** my choice in the future. "I promise to not do this again."

Discussion Questions:

1. We sometimes hear the phrase "forgive and forget". Can you forgive someone without forgetting what happened?
2. This sounds like a trivial question, but how does forgiveness figure into my behavior on the playground, in PE or at a sporting event?