

## Love Forgives (I Corinthians 13:5)

Since we live in a fallen world, whether or not we are hurt, wronged, offended is not really a choice... but how we respond to such treatment is a choice. We may choose to make a mental "hit list", record and rehearse the offenses and be drawn into the evil one's schemes (multiplying wrongnesses and empowering evil). We may do so inwardly, mentally etching the injury into our brain in order to make a debt out of it in the ledger of our heart and, in the process, become bitter, resentful, cynical, hateful (to name only a few possibilities). We may do so outwardly and seek to engage in some sort of retaliation or payback. After all, in the moment these options seem so "right". And if we forget that "there is a way that seems right to a man, but the end of that way is destruction" (Prov 14:12), we will engage in destructive and deadly responses. We will destroy relationships, others, even ourselves. Things will die - our peace, unity in the body, relationships, families...

Paul reminds us that there is another option. In fact, love does not really give us the aforementioned options. Love reminds us to "keep no record" of such wrongs by forgiving the offender. To grant the gift of forgiveness is Christ-like (Lk 23:24). (We said we wanted to be like Him, didn't we?) This subject doesn't need much interpretation but requires constant application, doesn't it? There's nothing passive or easy about forgiveness. It is an active choice to trust Christ and nothing less.

A good place to start is to accept God's full and total forgiveness of us (Col 2:13). Get lost in His unending grace and mercy, His unlimited supply of forgiveness. Then it is safer to acknowledge the offense and all its attending hurt and pain. We may bring all our heartache into the light and pour it into God's infinite love (this keeps the fear at bay that would cause us to cling to the violation for self preserving purposes). By giving it to God we choose not to record it as a debt needed to be held onto until paid in full by the offender. At times we may even need to repent of our own carnal ways we tried to deal with it all so that we may freely move on into His way of forgiveness. And then we must - love compels us - we must fully and freely forgive the offender. Sometimes all at once, sometimes in "stages". But we must choose to cooperate with His ongoing operation of forgiveness. In Matthew 18:35; Jesus calls it forgiving "from the heart". We place faith in the Forgiver Who lives in our heart and release His unlimited, undeserved forgiveness unto the offender. Sometimes its more of a journey - forgiving slowly, in layers, repeatedly until the assuring love of the Holy Spirit floods our heart for the other. We may even be asked to invest a treasure in the offender. (Matt 5:40-44; Ro 12:19-21). Why would we do that? This is what Love did for us (I Jo 4:17)!



## Praise Reports & Prayer Requests

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# GREETINGS

Most of you are aware that I Pastor a church in Gainesville that is comprised mostly of college students. Seventy-five to eighty percent of our congregation is under 25 and single! I enjoy the ministry with them and also the "challenge" of staying in tune with their world.

Nevertheless, our CCF leaders are in agreement with me that it is probably in their best interest to begin to look for a "full-time" pastor. We keep getting older but they stay the same age! Being gone 15-18 Sundays a year is not necessarily a good thing for their current needs. More availability during the week is being called for. Other reasons also seem to indicate we are at a good place for such a transition.

We are letting you in on this for your prayers, for you partnership with us in this journey, for any suggestions or contacts to fulfill such a role in a campus church. We will keep you informed. Our church is (mostly) excited about the possibilities. I am hopeful of someone willing and able to take CCF to the next "level" of community ministry and international missions. Join us please in this prayerful search.

**One In Christ, Inc.**  
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Alachua, Florida 32615

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

# CALENDAR

## APRIL

5-7 Titusville, FL (772-563-0430)  
9 Alachua Study  
14,21,28 CCF  
30 Ocala Study

## MAY

24-26 Dalton, PA (607-625-4612)

## JUNE

22-23 Bradenton, FL

## JULY

25-28 Bar Harbor, ME

## PRAISE & PRAYER

 *For the full & free forgiveness of Christ*

 *For the joy of the Lord*

 *CCF full time pastor*

 *Free flow of forgiveness unto others*

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