

## Compassion: Where Grace and Forgiveness Meet

Colossians 3:12-14

Couples Project . March 5, 2019

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**Part I** - *To be completed separately before the message. You can begin at your leisure, but time will be given at the beginning of the meeting to complete this first portion.*

1. Think of some marriages that you admire or perhaps aspire to be like. What are some of the things that draw you to them? What are some attributes you see in them?
2. Consider 2-3 areas of preference you wish were different in your spouse. (Not areas of overt sin, but of preference.) What would happen if you overlooked them and never spoke to them? ...if you accepted them as a part of who your spouse is? Don't write the areas down, but write the answers to the questions.
3. What are some of the areas of your marriage you wish would see significant improvement? List them here in priority order.

**Sermon Notes** - *For your reference as you review the message.*

*"Forbearance or patience should be our response to unintentional actions due to the faults or carelessness of another. Forgiveness should be our response to the intentional or provocative acts of another." (Jerry Bridges)*

- Offender + Offended + \_\_\_\_\_ = Mercy
- Offender + Offended + Anger = Revenge
- Offender + Offended + Self-Pity = Victim
- Offender + Offended + Compassion = Mercy

*"It would be a good contest amongst Christians, one to labour to give no offence, and the other to labour to take none. The best men are severe to themselves, tender over others." (Richard Sibbes)*

*"We need to begin living at the point where everything, and nothing short of that, is about the glory of God. That is the end for which we were made and, as Christians, that is the end for which we should live. Yet many of us have made an exchange. We have devalued living for God's glory and have valued living for something else as our ultimate satisfaction in life. For many of us, the shift has been subtle but the erosion steady." (Leslie Vernick)*

**Part II** - *To be completed separately after the message. Time will be given following the message to complete this second portion.*

1. What are two or three things you heard in the message that stand out to you as applicable to your marriage as it is currently?
2. What ingredient are YOU most often bringing to being offended that distracts from mercy? When you fill in the blank, with what do you most often fill it?
3. Envision what your marriage would look like if you applied this message. What would be different? In what ways? What change could occur tonight or tomorrow if applied? Write your thoughts here.

**Part III** - *To be completed together within one week after the meeting. Take time where you can talk in an uninterrupted and unhurried way to complete the third portion of this project. (Time permitting, you can even begin this while at the meeting after completing Part II.) Feel free to use this worksheet however you wish. If you want a plan, consider the one below:*

1. Pray. Ask God for his help to keep your conversation fruitful and redemptive. If, at any point during the conversation you feel conflict brewing, stop and remember together that Christ means to be the center of the marriage and the conversation, not a conflict.
2. Take the time to share your answers from Question 1 in Part II. Realize that God may have spoken to each of you in different ways, seeking to address different things. Don't correct or critique. Simply inform and share God's activity during the message.
3. Review your answers to Questions 3 from Part I. It is likely your spouse has a different list or a different order of priority than you do. Don't negotiate or debate the numbers. Seek to learn from the difference and apply to yourself.
4. Review your answers to Question 3 from Part II. Listen to one another share why they've answered in the way they have. Discuss potential first steps in moving toward that application.
5. Pray. Ask God to strengthen you with the might of his power as he fills your marriage with his Spirit. Ask him to forgive you for your contribution to any challenges and thank him for bringing you together as a couple. Pray that God would provide all of the help you need.