From the Cross to Forgiveness

Colossians 3:12-13

How to Move from Being Forgiven to Being Forgiving:

Don't Be Surprised…

"Unreconciled relationships within the church are inevitable because the church is such a wonderful, supernaturally created community!

> *The reason there are so many exhortations in the New Testament for Christians to love other Christians is because . . . the church itself is not made up of natural "friends." It is made up of natural enemies. What binds us together is not common education, common race, common income levels, common politics, common nationality, common accents, common jobs, or anything else of that sort [that bind most other groups of people together]. Christians come together not because they form a natural collocation, but because they have all been saved by Jesus Christ and owe him a common allegiance. In this light we are a band of natural enemies who love one another for Jesus' sake. That is the only reason why John 13:34–35 makes sense when Jesus says: "A new command I give you--Love one another as I have loved you." . . . Christian love will stand out and bear witness to Jesus because it is a display, for Jesus' sake, of mutual love among social incompatibles.* (D. A. Carson, *Love in Hard Places* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 2002), p. 61)

The reason we will have to hold ourselves accountable for our relationships is that mutual love in Christian community is super-hard. Jesus has brought incompatibles together! But the reason we will want to hold ourselves accountable for our relationships is that mutual love in Christian community is one of the main ways the world will see who Jesus is. So we must never give up on each other. So we must pursue each other in love."

(Excerpt from "Serving Each Other Through Forgiveness and Reconciliation" - Copyright © 2005 by Timothy Keller, © 2009 by Redeemer City to City. This article first appeared in The Gospel and Life conferences of 2004 and 2005.)