

We occasionally hear expressions like: “It takes one to know one”, and: “You cannot give away what you don’t already have.” Those words certainly apply when it comes to extending forgiveness to others - especially to our enemies.

Paul’s exhortation in Ephesians 4:32 is an example. The first half of the verse is not unexpected - an exhortation to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving toward others. But it is the second half of the verse that is arresting in its implication: We are to forgive others just as God in Christ has forgiven us. We might be inclined to be kind and forgiving toward others without taking the standard of God’s forgiveness into account. How did God forgive? Totally and unconditionally - for past, present, and future sins. In fact, God forgave us “when we were enemies”. (Romans 5:10) So that is our standard when it comes to forgiving those who have hurt us - past, present, and future - unconditional forgiveness.

So do an inventory of your forgiveness toward others, and if there is someone you have not forgiven totally and unconditionally, purpose to forgive them as God has forgiven you.

Ephesians 4:32 “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.”