

SESSION 5: FORGIVENESS

Welcome and Program Overview (Facilitator): 10 minutes

Session #5 Teaching: Eight Forgiveness Steps 10 minutes

1. Forgiveness should not be confused with forgetting. Not even God forgets your sin, He simply chooses to “remember it no more.” If you wait for the pain to vanish before forgiving, you will never get anywhere.
2. Forgiveness is your choice. Sometimes people say that they simply CAN'T forgive, but in reality, they WON'T forgive. God requires you to forgive; it is something you can do, because God wouldn't ask if you couldn't. Forgiveness seems to go against your sense of what is right and fair, so you hold on to your anger, punishing people over and over in your mind for the pain they've caused you, but you are told by God never to take your own revenge!
3. You forgive others so YOU can be FREE.
4. Don't wait for others to ask for forgiveness before forgiving them. They may never do so.
5. Forgiveness must come from your heart. Allow God to bring to the surface the painful emotions you feel toward those who have hurt you. Too often we're afraid of the pain associated with this process so we bury them deep down inside us. Let God bring them up so He can heal the hurts.
6. Forgiveness is choosing not to hold sin against the offender. It is common for bitter people to bring up past issues with those who have hurt them. They want the offender to feel bad, but you must free them as you free yourself and let go of the past.
7. Forgiveness requires you to have mercy on others. Just as God shows YOU mercy and cancels YOUR debts, He commands YOU to do the same.
8. Focus on forgiving people for what they did and resist judging their character. Remember, how you forgive others is how God will forgive you.

Small Group Discussion: 25 minutes

Each participant share your thoughts and experiences from 4-Day Study Plan from the last week.

- *Do you hold on to the anger, bitterness & resentment from YOUR past? Discuss in your group.*
- *How do your offenses keep you from deeper relationships with Christ and others? Discuss in your group.*
- *Are YOU willing to forgive YOU? What does that even look like? Discuss in your group*

Group Prayer Time: 15 minutes

Pray with your group about forgiveness. Let God bring people and any frustrations, bitterness or offenses to your mind that you need to get beyond. Write them down in your journal. We also often we hold things against ourselves, punishing ourselves for wrong choices we've made in the past. Write "myself" at the bottom of your list so you can forgive yourself

For each thing on your list above, pray the following prayer:

Lord, I choose to forgive (name of person) for (say what they did to hurt you) even though it made me feel (share the painful feelings).

When you are finished forgiving that person for all the offenses that come to your mind, and after you have honestly expressed how you felt, conclude with the following:

Lord, I choose not to hold any of these things against (name) any longer. I choose to cancel all debts owed me. I thank You for setting me free from the bondage of my bitterness toward (name). I now ask You to bless (name), in the name of Jesus, Amen.

At home, review these steps toward forgiveness...

Forgiveness is NOT easy and I'm sure the last week has been a difficult one as you attempt to forgive those who have hurt you. This is not a simple process and entails a lot more work. Today, we will cover the continuous 8-step process of forgiving, as we need to allow it to grow in us to have victory in Christ in the long run!

SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional Day 1

Read Matthew 18:21-35

In The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, who do YOU relate to in the passage? What passage jumps out at you and why?

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

.....
.....
.....
.....

I = Investigate: the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#)

.....
.....
.....
.....

F=Focus: to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

E = Engage: God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional Day 2

Read Isaiah 43:14-28

God has big plans for you, as you get past the hurts that have held you back. Look at verses 19 and then 25 and journal about the “new thing” God is revealing in your heart and how blessed you are that He forgave YOU and allows you to forgive others.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you’re studying. After you’ve read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

.....

.....

.....

.....

I = Investigate: the context around today’s Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#)

.....

.....

.....

.....

F=Focus: to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you’ve read?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

E = Engage: God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you’ve learned?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional Day 3

Read Psalm 147

Forgiveness must come from your heart. Too often we're afraid of the pain associated with this process so we bury them deep down inside us. Let God bring them up so He can heal the hurts.

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

.....

.....

.....

I = Investigate: the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#)

.....

.....

.....

F=Focus: to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

.....

.....

.....

.....

E = Engage: God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

.....

.....

.....

.....

SESSION 5: Weekly Devotional Day 4

Read Romans 12:9-21

Review the **8-steps of forgiveness** in the next session. Take today and spend time in Listening Prayer to reflect on your LIFE Starter time this week and to receive all that God wants you to receive about forgiveness. **Make notes to share with your group**

L=Listen: in your journal by writing the date and the Scripture you're studying. After you've read the passage a few times, focus on a verse or two that stands out to you and then write out those verses in your journal

.....
.....
.....

I = Investigate: the context around today's Scripture reading. To whom was this written? Why? How does this passage fit with what comes before and after it? What is the Holy Spirit communicating through this text? Feel free to use Bible study tools for commentary: [Bible Study Tools](#), or [Easy English Bible](#)

.....
.....
.....

F=Focus: to the text to make it applicable for your own life. What is God saying to you personally through this passage? How can you apply what you've read?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

E = Engage: God. This can either be a short prayer or an action that you can take that day after reading the text. Is there a command to follow in the text? How are you different because of what you've learned?

.....
.....
.....
.....