

SESSION 5: FORGIVENESS

◆ Welcome and Program Overview (Facilitator): 10 minutes Session #5 Teaching: Eight Forgiveness Steps 10 minutes

How many times a day do you think about what they did to you and what you would do if you could do it all over again? How often do you dream up scenarios where they get what they deserve?

Perhaps the greatest area of bondage I see people in is unforgiveness.

It is like taking poison and hoping it hurts that person.

If you're going to walk forward in leading your family, you have to walk through forgiveness.

Here are 8 key points as you consider this:

1. Forgiveness should not be confused with forgetting. God forgets your sin because He simply chooses to "remember it no more." If you wait for the pain to vanish before forgiving, you live a defeated life.
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 give you what you think you need.
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 cancel the debt you think they owe you and move on free person. Forgiveness Brings Freedom!
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 Wrap-Up: 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...

SESSION #5

WK. 5 DEVO 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

WK. 5 DEVO 2

Read Matthew 6:14-15

This is for our benefit unforgiveness develops into bitterness which can have big consequences.

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SESSION #5

WK. 5 DEVO 3

Read Mark 11:25, Proverbs 17:9

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.

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SESSION #5

WK. 5 DEVO 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!**

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