

FORGIVENESS

WHAT IS FORGIVENESS?

Memory Verse: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." - Ephesians 4:32

Overview

As we explore the vast and deep topic of forgiveness, we will spend our first study focusing on the question, 'what is forgiveness?' How do we define the word forgiveness? What has been our experience with it and should it always result in friendship? Let's get started.

Key Verse

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

- Romans 12:18



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1

If you haven't already, spend a few minutes praying, inviting the Holy Spirit into your conversations.

2

When you hear the word 'forgiveness', what comes to mind? How would you define forgiveness? Has it been relatively easy for you to forgive, or have you found it difficult? Can you think of any examples where you've seen forgiveness displayed (inside and outside the Bible)?

The Greek word for 'forgive' is 'aphiemi', and it conveys the idea of letting go, leaving something, sending something away, and liberating something. It could equate to a ship being sent out to sea, arrows being loosed, letting something pass by or letting go of a debt.

3

Do the definitions above affirm or challenge your current understanding of forgiveness? Why? Read the Key Verse. Does forgiveness always require reconciliation (def = "to make friendly again")? What tension/balance is there between wisdom and love around forgiveness?

4

Read Matt 18:21-35. According to this passage, how often should we forgive? What does it tell us about God? What does it tell us about us/others? Who do you see yourself as in this story at the moment, and why?

APPLICATION



1

Thinking

What is the main thing you have learnt or been reminded of in today's study?

2

Doing

How are you going to apply what you've learnt?

3

Committing

Commit to keep each other accountable in your application. Be ready to share the next time you meet.

4

Praying

Close this study in prayer, thanking God and asking Him for help, strength, and wisdom.

FORGIVENESS FORGIVEN BY GOD

Memory Verse: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." - Ephesians 4:32

Overview

In our previous study we explored 'what is forgiveness?' We looked at the Greek word for forgive and the meanings it conveys.

It's important to take a moment to share how your application has gone. We study to be changed, not just to increase in knowledge.

Key Verse

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace."

- Ephesians 1:7



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1 If you haven't already, spend a few minutes praying, inviting the Holy Spirit into your conversations.

2 Read the Key Verse. How does God's forgiveness compare/contrast with what we learnt in the previous study? What did it cost God to forgive us (Rom 5:8; Col 2:13-14; 2 Pet 2:24)? If you're comfortable, share a time when you experienced God's forgiveness. How did you feel before/after? Why is it so important that God forgives us?

Forgiveness is a process. It involves two halves: giving and receiving. God extends forgiveness to us in Christ. But there also needs to be a receiving. In other words, forgiveness is given and initiated by God, but for it to have its full effect, namely, reconciliation, it must be received.

3 How did Jesus' sacrifice enable God to forgive us? Are there any conditions or prerequisites for receiving God's forgiveness (1 John 1:9)? What are some reasons we don't want to receive God's forgiveness, and what might be the solution(s)?

4 Read Luke 11:15-32. How does this parable illustrate God's forgiveness and restoration? What does it teach us about His character? In what ways are you like the younger/older brother? Finally, read Micah 7:19. How does God see our sin, and what is His response? How does this help us understand God's desired effect of forgiveness?

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FORGIVENESS FORGIVING OTHERS

Memory Verse: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." - Ephesians 4:32

Overview

In our previous study, we looked at God's forgiveness. We saw how He took the first step and forgave us in Christ, what it cost Him, and the example of the prodigal son.

Today we turn our thoughts inward. What is our response, and how do we find the strength to forgive.

Key Verse

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- Ephesians 4:32



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2

If you're comfortable, share a time when you had to forgive someone. What was the result? Why do we find it hard to forgive others? How does our family shape our understanding of forgiveness?

The world we live in holds relationships on a tightrope. One wrong step, and it falls apart. Cancel culture is too readily accepted. Fighting for a relationship isn't often promoted. If you're offended, or it gets too difficult, we're encouraged to move on; you don't need them in your life. This isn't what God wants. This certainly isn't how He treats us.

3

Read the Key Verse and Rom 5:8, Col 1:21-22, 3:12-14. How are we to mirror God's example, and how does His example give us the strength to forgive? In light of the above paragraph and the verses we read, how are we encouraged to live differently compared to the world? Why are we encouraged to live differently? What is God's purpose through us?

4

Read Matt 6:14-15 & John 14:15. What difference is there between refusing to forgive and wanting to but finding it hard? Finally, read Gen 50:15-21, 1 Pet 2:23, 3:29. What do we learn about forgiveness from Joseph and these passages? Why does he say, 'Am I in the place of God?'

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FORGIVENESS FORGIVING OURSELVES

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Overview

In our previous study, we looked at what it means to forgive others, knowing we've been forgiven by God.

Sometimes we find it easier to forgive others but have a hard time forgiving ourselves. Let's see what God has to say about it.

Key Verse

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus..."

- Romans 8:1



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1 If you haven't already, spend a few minutes praying, inviting the Holy Spirit into your conversations.

2 Why do we find it so hard to forgive ourselves? What can happen if we choose not to forgive ourselves? If you're comfortable, share a time when you struggled to forgive yourself and what the result was.

The devil will often try to cause us to feel and believe the opposite of God's words. Before Christ, we were guilty of sin and in need of Him, yet the devil would try to convince us we weren't guilty and didn't need forgiveness. In Christ, we are guiltless and see free, yet the devil will try to convince us that we are now guilty and should walk in that guilt.

3 Read John 8:1-11. How might this story help us when others or the devil try to keep us in a place of persistent guilt? Where do you place the most weight, and what impact do you think it has: on what God says, what others say, or what you say about yourself?

4 Read Rom 8:1 & Gal 5:1. What do these verses teach us about those who are in Christ Jesus? How does God see us through Christ (2 Cor 5:21)? Finally, read 1 John 1:9. If God forgives us when we're sorry because of Jesus' sacrifice, why is it important we forgive ourselves?

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