

A sunset over the ocean with the word 'FORGIVENESS' in large white letters. The sky is filled with soft, golden clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the water. The waves are gentle and rhythmic, reflecting the light from the sky.

FORGIVENESS

IMPORTANCE | EXTENDING | TRANSACTING | REDEEMING

SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDY SERIES

FORGIVENESS

Receiving it, seeking it, offering it, transacting it, understanding it.

Small Group Bible Studies
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All Scriptures references are from the Holy Bible, *English Standard Version*. (2001) 2016.
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Study 1

THE IMPORTANCE OF FORGIVENESS

Objectives

1. To understand what genuine forgiveness is.
2. To be able to receive God's forgiveness.
3. To experience freedom from hurt and bitterness through a transaction of forgiveness.

A young minister had recently arrived to be installed as the church's new pastor. Most of his new congregation were nearly twice his age and dealing with life problems that he had never experienced. Yet despite this, he quickly won their support and trust as they soon came to know him. What he lacked in life experience he more than made up for by his depth of knowledge of God's Word and how to apply it pastorally. It wasn't long before others heard about the young minister's wisdom in dealing with some of these problems they had long battled with and they flocked to hear him offer this wisdom Sunday by Sunday as well. As he called for a response to his sermons, men came forward asking for prayer for the years of guilt they had carried for the wrongs they had committed and the people they had hurt, women came forward for the load of bitterness they were carrying toward their ex-husbands who had abused them horribly, and younger mothers came forward asking for God to heal their marriages that were now under strain since the arrival of the child. In each instance this young minister was dealing with a wrong understanding of forgiveness - how to receive it from God, seek it from others, extend it to others, and experience what a transaction of forgiveness felt like.

1. Read Matthew 18:21-22 and note the difference in Peter's and Christ's understanding about forgiving -

2. In Matthew 18:23-35 how did Jesus reveal the basis for how we could forgive those who have hurt us

3. How does Christ's statement in Matthew 18:35 show us that forgiveness is not really just a matter of telling someone that you forgive them?

When someone i _____ y hurts or offends us in some way, our most natural impulse is to hurt them back. The desire for revenge is the seedbed for a psychological poison called b _____ s which actually does nothing to the person who has hurt you. Forgiveness is the antidote to this poison.

4. How does Ephesians 4:31-32 describe genuine forgiveness?

5. If left unchecked and not dealt with, what damage can bitterness do to a soul according to Hebrew 12:15?

What Happens When We Forgive

Unforgiveness is a symptom of hurt. Hurt can look like tears, anger, malicious talk, sullenness, withdrawal, and even over-the-top happiness when in public. But when someone resolves that they will forgive the one who has hurt them they relinquish their hurt and their r _ _ _ t to hurt that person back. In essence they cancel the indebtedness of the offender.

6. What does this kind of forgiveness do to a person’s soul? Discuss.

How Receiving God’s Forgiveness Enables Us To Forgive Others

Let’s reconsider Christ’s parable of the forgiving king in Matthew 18:22-35.

7. In your own words, what was the point that Jesus was making about why His followers should be enabled to forgive others? Discuss and share.

Becoming a follower of Christ is made possible because an offending sinner has now accepted God’s offer of forgiveness and salvation from their sins (Acts 10:43; 26:18; Eph. 1:7). In fact, the desire to now forgive those who offend or hurt a believer is an evidence that God has transformed a person’s heart (note Matt. 6:15; Luke 6:37).

8. Carefully consider Colossians 3:13. *Why* should the follower of Christ forgive others? *How* should a believer forgive others?

Why: _____

How: _____

The Apostle Paul makes the same point about *how* to forgive others to the Ephesians (Ephesians 4:32). Unfortunately, there are times when someone may hurt or offend you without regret. It is unlikely then that the offender would ever seek your forgiveness. But even if they do not, or ever do, you are still obligated to forgive them from your heart by relinquishing your right to hurt them back.

What Forgiveness Does Not Do

- (1) Undo all c_____s.
- (2) Instantly restore t____t.

The expression, *forgive and forget* is rarely anyone's story. Hurt can be forgiven but it can only be t_____d when there is a genuine apology. How to be forgiven — and how to transact forgiveness — will be what we will look at in our next study.