

Icebreaker:

What would you do if suddenly all your debts were canceled?

Questions:

1. How has God's forgiveness, or someone else's forgiveness, affected your life and your willingness to forgive others?
2. Which is the hardest to do: give forgiveness or receive forgiveness?
3. Bible Background: Read John 16:31-33. This passage comes before the disciples abandon Jesus. What do you think this passage tells us about Jesus?
4. Do you wrestle believing you've been forgiven by God?
5. Nelson Mandela once said, "Not forgiving is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die." Share your thoughts on this quote.
6. In Matthew 18:31, the slaves were distressed or saddened at what the person who had been forgiven had done. Theologian Dale Bruner says, "Anger is understandable where there is injustice, but if anger is unmixed with sorrow there is something wrong." How might we respond differently if we were not just angry but saddened with those who commit injustices?
7. Do you have someone in mind that you need to offer forgiveness or receive forgiveness?

Prayer:

As you are praying with your group, please remember our congregational prayer requests:

prayer requests

- > Prayers for strength for Walker Brewer, born 7 weeks early.
- > Prayers of healing for Ed Nelson.
- > Prayers of comfort for the family of Jim Crousore in his passing and for Lynsey Thomann and family in the passing of Lynsey's cousin.

[The following are from ZPC's prayer calendar, which is available at the Welcome Center or at zpc.org/prayer.]

- > Pray for 2nd Half Adventurers as they give so much time to show Christ's love to others.
- > Pray for volunteers and those impacted by Str8Up Ministry.

In response to a question by Peter about how many times to forgive, Jesus says that we should forgive people seventy times seven. This is not really meant to be 490 times, but to be unlimited forgiveness. In the Lord's Prayer, we are called to forgive others as God has first forgiven us. Yet, forgiveness can be difficult to receive or give when the hurt is deep. May God help us to be a forgiving people so that our hearts will not grow hard or bitter, but stay soft towards God and others.

1. Encourage your group to share at a level they can share, about a specific example of forgiveness in their lives.
2. This is another personal question. Help your group to share which is more difficult for them, to give or receive forgiveness. Feel free to explore the topic with any follow up questions you have.
3. Jesus knew the disciples would abandon him near the end of his life. Yet, he still promised them peace. Despite knowing they would fail him, he was able to forgive them and bless them. Jesus is not only God and our Savior, but a human example of how to forgive others.
4. Even "good Christians" sometimes wrestle with feeling forgiven by God. We also struggle at times forgiving ourselves. Continue to pray for God to help you to forgive yourself and to receive God's forgiveness.
5. Imagine drinking rat poison and waiting for the rat to die. It makes no sense. When we don't forgive others, it can poison us. A local pastor said unforgiveness imprisons us just like the criminal is in prison. It hardens our hearts, stops us from being joyful, and can lead to anger and bitterness. So forgive freely!
6. In verse 31, the word for distressed can be translated saddened. In a healthy way, we can be saddened for the person who committed an injustice. We can feel for their brokenness which would cause them to commit horrible acts. We might respond with more heartfelt forgiveness and desiring change for people if we can be sad for them.
7. Reflect if God is placing anyone on your mind or heart that you need to forgive, or where you need to receive forgiveness. May God bless you to forgive!

Thank you for leading a Home Group this fall!