



Forgiveness is hard!

Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no records of wrongs. *1 Corinthians 13:4-5*

Why should I forgive?

“Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”
Matthew 6:12

Forgive as the Lord forgave you. *Colossians 3:13*

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other just as in Christ God forgave you. *Ephesians 4:32*

“But if you do not forgive others, your Father in heaven will not forgive your sins.” *Matthew 6:15*

TRUTH: When we understand God’s forgiveness of us, we begin to understand that we must forgive those who do us wrong.

He has taken our sins away from us as far as the east is from the west. *Psalms 103:12*

When should I forgive?

TRUTH: Forgive at the same pace you want God’s forgiveness.

How can I forgive?

“Forgiveness is a choice. It’s a voluntary form of suffering.”
Timothy Keller

Talk to God.

Realize how much God’s forgiven you.

Do the **hard** **work** of forgiveness.

TRUTH: We should forgive and remember how God has forgiven us.

For Group Discussion

Answer these questions prior to your Small Group meeting this week.

Introduction

“Forgive and forget!” That is the statement of someone who has never been hurt. Most people can think of at least one person they struggle to forgive. The pain is too deep, and the hurt too tender. Christians are no exception. The painful reality is that offenses will come—they are part of the fabric of our fallen world. But we can choose to respond to offenses biblically. We can choose to forgive.

Discussion Questions

1. Forgiveness feels great—as long as we’re the beneficiaries. We like being forgiven, but it’s not very easy when we are the ones who have to forgive. What holds people back from forgiving?

Think about the areas in your life where you struggle to forgive, and share the types of offenses that make it hardest for you. Typically, what conditions must be met before you extend forgiveness to someone who has offended you in one of these areas?

2. When it comes to your relationships, how do you typically withhold forgiveness? Do you hold grudges, explode in anger, seek revenge, or something else?

Read Matthew 6:12 & 14-15. Jesus teaches us to forgive “debts.” In these verses, what measure does He use to gauge God’s forgiveness toward us? How does unforgiveness affect your relationship with God?

3. Christian author and theologian, Lewis Smedes writes, “When you refuse to forgive, you are giving the person who walloped you once the privilege of hurting you all over again – in your memory.” Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Share an example from your own experience when refusing to forgive someone actually hurt you.

4. Read Colossians 3:13. Is there someone in your life you have not forgiven? What would it look like for you to extend the same forgiveness to them that God has extended to you?

How would it change your relationships if you committed to forgiving, not because they deserve it, but because God forgave you?

What steps will you take this week to show God’s grace, love, and forgiveness to others?

OUTREACH: GROUPS IN ACTION

The Greenwood campus needs caring, loving people to help in the Children’s Ministry as elementary and preschool leaders. You don’t need to be a “teacher” to be an amazing volunteer. Just be willing to share your life with some pretty amazing kids. We will help you figure out the rest. If you are interested in serving, please contact Elia Mrakovich at emrakovich@eclife.org or fill out our Children’s Ministry application at eclife.org/connect/childrens-ministry/.

We have a team of women who go into our Johnson County jails and minister to women on a regular basis. If this is an area that you are passionate about, or you would like to learn more about this amazing ministry, email Debbie Kidwell at dkidwell@eclife.org.

Action Step

Fill in the blanks below for this upcoming week.

My action steps are _____.

I’m accountable for _____, and their action steps are _____.

My memory verse is _____.

This coming week, I’m praying for: