

CANCELLED

5 Week series on FORGIVENESS

Week 1 - Matthew 18:21-35

Leader Notes:

There are some topics that will likely come up this week, such as fairness, justice and boundaries. As a reminder the goal of the study is Forgiveness. We want questions and conversations to lead us to further discuss that, but we know it takes various roads to arrive there. If there are questions on those things feel free to include them, just don't let that sidetrack or derail the conversation from centering around Forgiveness.

BELONG

Ask this Ice Breaker Question: What is a silly grudge you still hold on to from your childhood?

Example: Asking for a pet but not being able to get it, never getting to go in the ball pit at McDonalds

BELIEVE

Have someone in your group read aloud: Matthew 18:21-35 and discuss this definition for Forgiveness that we will be working from

Forgiveness - a promise not to keep a record of wrongs against someone

Ask these questions to prompt group discussion:

1. **Peter's question "How many times must I forgive someone else?" launches this parable. He was asking Jesus about the limits of forgiveness. Why do you think that humans struggle with the limits of something like forgiveness?**

Leader Context:

- Allow this first question to be a time to get everyone sharing.
 - Forgiveness costs us something - time, emotions, power, money, relational currency, honor. Therefore, like any cost, we want to minimize the cost of forgiveness.
 - Forgiveness is also incredibly uncomfortable. We want to minimize our discomfort.
2. **Jesus tells the parable from two perspectives: the forgiven and the forgiver. In terms of costs, which do you think is more costly - to ask for forgiveness or to grant forgiveness?**



Leader Context:

- *There are no right answers. This question is designed to get you talking.*
- *For some FORGIVING may feel more costly.*
- *For others BEING FORGIVEN may feel more costly.*
- *Some might struggle with the word "costly" so consider reframing that question to connect with your group.*

3. Jesus says that God will treat us as a vengeful Master if we do not extend forgiveness.
What do you make of this portrait of God and the seriousness with which He expects us to forgive?

Leader Context:

- *For some, this might be a shocking portrait, as they have a portrait of God as nice, soft, gentle, and passive.*
- *For others, this might be a redemptive portrait, as they have a strong sense of justice and want God to be true to His Word.*
- *Still, for others, this might be uncomfortable, as they have not regularly practiced forgiveness and may be wrestling with the reality that God means business.*

BECOME

ASK: *(this is for each person to reflect on, you can read aloud at your table)*

"Is there anyone I really don't want to share eternity with? Anyone I would struggle to accept even if God forgave them?"

Prayer: *Jesus, forgive me for excluding people from Your kingdom, even if only in my thoughts. I take a moment to pray now for the person or people I struggle with and ask that they encounter the love of God today.... Maybe even through me.*

