



BREAKOUT Session 6
Order Your Relationships

Welcome back to the BREAKOUT series for LifeGroups! This week we are taking step 6 – ORDER YOUR RELATIONSHIPS. This is another intimacy step. It is the step that calls on me to evaluate and then do all I can to make sure my relationships honour God. You can put it this way – *“I forgive those who’ve hurt me and I make amends for the hurt I’ve caused, except when to do so would harm others.”* This is not an easy step. It requires guts. But it is so pivotal. Forgiveness is tough. Making amends is tough. But getting this dimension right, doing all I can to honour God here is essential.

CATCHING UP:

When I was a kid, two games that the neighbourhood kids loved to play were “kick the can” and road hockey. I remember many evenings with the sun long down out shouting with my neighbourhood friends as we played one of these games. What games did you enjoy playing with friends when you were around 10 or 12? Any funny experiences you can recall? If you could, would you go back and play one of those games again?

MEMORY VERSE:

“God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” Matthew 5:7

VIDEO TEACHING: Watch session 6 together. (access the videos at breakoutseries.ca)

Today’s STEP – _____ YOUR RELATIONSHIPS.

Who do I need to make _____ with? Who do I need to _____?

Passages on Forgiving Other
Ephesians 4:32
Colossians 3:13

Forgiveness Begins Here : I am completely _____ by God.

“We struggle to forgive other people because we don’t feel forgiven ourselves.”

Ground Rules for Forgiveness

1. Forgiving doesn’t necessarily mean the relationship will be _____.
2. It doesn’t let the person off the hook for needing to make _____.
3. It’s not _____ the offense.
4. It is _____ the person in my heart.

When I _____ for my offender, God can change my heart.

Steps to Forgive.

1. _____ the hurt.
2. _____ the offender.
3. _____ the hurt with God’s peace.

MAKING AMENDS

It often starts with _____.

Matthew 5:7 “God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”

What does making amends look like? 3 Possibilities.

1. There are times when a _____ to _____ meeting is best.
2. Write a _____.
3. Involve a _____.

Seek the _____ in others for how to go about this. (Friend, Pastor, Counselor)

STUDY:

NOTE: All Scriptures in this study are from the New Living Translation unless otherwise indicated.

Today we are focusing on a second Intimacy step. Our goal is to explore how to ORDER YOUR RELATIONSHIPS as part of breaking free from hurts, hang-ups and habits in our life.

- How has watching the video helped you see the value of ordering your relationships?

ORDERING YOUR RELATIONSHIPS – FORGIVING OTHERS

Forgiveness Defined:

To some people, forgiveness may seem like weakness or letting an undeserving person win, but it has no connection to weakness or even to emotions. Instead, forgiveness is an act of the will. Forgiveness is not granted because a person deserves to be forgiven. No one deserves to be forgiven. Forgiveness is a deliberate act of love, mercy, and grace. Forgiveness is a decision to not hold something against another person, despite what he or she has done to you. SOURCE: Got Questions – What is forgiveness?

- What do you think of this definition of forgiveness? Is there anything you would add to this definition? Anything you would take away?

Let's explore what God tells us about why we should forgive others and how our forgiveness of others is directly linked to our relationship with Him.

I SHOULD FORGIVE OTHERS BECAUSE GOD HAS FORGIVEN ME

If you have access to the internet, watch "The Unforgiving Servant" video as a group.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n-Dl5dqLz5M>

- In what ways can you relate to young man with the huge debt?
- How does this video impact your understanding of how God wants us to forgive?

READ: Matthew 18:21-35

- Why do you think forgiving others is such a big deal to God?
- What does it look like to actually forgive someone?
- If you could ask God a question about what it means to forgive, what would you ask Him?

Lewis Smedes was a Christian author and theologian. He wrote and taught extensively on the power of forgiveness. Below are two of his famous quotes. Read each one and then talk about what impacts you about that quote.

“To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.” Lewis Smedes

READ: Job 21:23-25. *“Some people stay healthy till the day they die ... Others have no happiness at all; they live and die with bitter hearts.”* GNT

- How does harbouring bitterness and resentment make us a prisoner?
- How have you seen bitterness take root in your own life or in the life of someone you know?

“You will know that forgiveness has begun when you recall those who hurt you and feel the power to wish them well.”

— **Lewis B. Smedes**

READ: Romans 12:14 *“Bless those who persecute you. Don’t curse them: pray that God will bless them.”*

- What might it look like practically to bless someone we are wanting to forgive?
- How might God use your commitment to pray for someone who has hurt you to help you forgive them from your heart?

ORDERING MY RELATIONSHIPS – MAKING AMENDS

Making Amends defined: When someone becomes a follower of Jesus, he will have a deep desire to do good. This desire can include making amends where possible for wrongs done in the past. Making amends is not a requirement for salvation but it is part of our ongoing desire to follow and honour Jesus by making things right with others whom we have wronged.

- What do think of this definition? Is there anything you would add or take away?

READ: Luke 19:1-10 Zacchaeus’ Encounter with Jesus – An Example of Making Amends

Context of Luke 19:1-10 On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus encountered a man named Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector in the area. Chief tax collectors leased from the Romans the right to collect taxes in a certain region. They had subordinate tax collectors from whom they would collect a commission, thus making themselves very wealthy. Chief tax collectors were hated by the people. Zacchaeus is a good role model for us of what it can look like to make amends. He showed a genuine interest in Jesus, being willing to humble himself and climb a tree to be able to see Jesus. When Zacchaeus met Jesus, he expressed his desire to make amends by offering to pay back 4 times the amount of any money (the standard amount would have been 20% above the amount taken) that he had cheated people out of.

- How do you think Zacchaeus' act of climbing the tree showed his genuine spiritual interest in Jesus? (v. 3)
- How do you think Jesus' going to Zacchaeus' house impacted Zacchaeus spiritually? What does Jesus' act say about his heart for us today?
- What do you think motivated Zacchaeus to offer to give away half his wealth and to make amends? (v. 8)
- After Zacchaeus offers to make amends, Jesus tells the group, "Salvation has come to this home today ...". Do you think making amends is a key part of repentance? Why or why not?
- How does the story of Zacchaeus impact your understanding of what it means to make amends?

PRAYER

READ Matthew 6:9-13 out loud together as a group:

"Our Father in heaven,
may your name be kept holy.
May your Kingdom come soon.
May your will be done on earth,
as it is in heaven.
Give us today the food we need,
and forgive us our sins,
as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
And don't let us yield to temptation,
but rescue us from the evil one."

Ask God for wisdom and courage to forgive and to make amends as He speaks to your heart.

Options for Further Study for your LifeGroup or on your Own.

Let's take a further look at the power of forgiveness and how to do it well.

God knows forgiveness is tough. He can help you forgive.

READ: Philippians 4:13

“For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.”

- When it comes to forgiveness, we need God's help. How can asking God help you take the action to forgive?

To forgive others, I need to be willing to forgive myself

READ: 1 John 1:8-9

“If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.”

Forgiving myself is an essential part of being in a place where I am able to forgive others. Often we hold ourselves more accountable than other people. The act of forgiving ourselves means that we embrace the same standard of forgiving ourselves as God has for us. God forgives us, not because we deserve it, but because His Son, Jesus, paid the price for it.

- What do I need to forgive myself for? What would it look like to take that step?

Forgiveness is a natural part of what it means to love God and others

READ: 1 Corinthians 13:4 - 6

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. NIV

- Forgiveness is a natural outflow of our relationship with God. It's an act of the will. How does this help you understand forgiveness?

When you forgive someone and resentment creeps back in, forgive again.

READ: Ephesians 4:31-32

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behaviour. Instead, be kind to each other, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.”

- Like weeds growing in the garden, God wants us to weed out bitterness and resentment from our life. How might you know that resentment is creeping back in? What can you do to get rid of it?

Acting in love toward those who have hurt us is part of forgiveness

READ: Luke 6:35

“Love your enemies! Do good to them. Lend to them without expecting to be repaid. They will repay you from heaven. Your reward from heaven will be very great, and you will be truly acting as children of the Most High, for he is kind to those who are unthankful and wicked.”

- Jesus taught us to respond to those who hurt us with acts of compassion and grace. When it is appropriate, what might it look like for you to serve and love someone who has hurt you in the past?