

RELATIONSHIPS: LET GO
LIFEGROUP STUDY
Jan. 24, 2021
LEADER NOTES

Welcome back to our LifeGroup series, Relationships! Today our topic is called, “Let Go.” Forgiveness is never easy but always the right thing to do. Letting go should be a way of life for people in the Kingdom of God. Forgiveness is like breathing. We breath in forgiveness from God and we breath out forgiveness for others. Understanding what forgiveness is and how to exercise it is key to healthy relationships.

ICEBREAKER: Let it Go!

You know the song, right? Remember that scene from the movie, Frozen, where Elsa belts out “Let it Go!” in the middle of a stormy winter blast on top of a mountain? Have you cranked up the volume and sung “Let it Go!” at the top of your lungs? If you haven’t with “Let it Go” is there another movie soundtrack you can’t resist singing with? Share your story (or if you’re really brave – sing your song) for your group! 😊

STUDY

Think back to Pete’s teaching about forgiveness being a way of life for people in the Kingdom of God. **How did this idea help you understand the purpose and power of forgiveness?**

For our study time, we’ll look first at the forgiveness we have in Christ, then at our response, to forgive just as we have been forgiven.

I. OUR FORGIVENESS IN CHRIST

“Forgiveness in the Bible is a “release” or “dismissal” of something. The forgiveness we have in Christ involves the release of sinners from God’s just penalty and the complete dismissal of all charges against us.” [Got Questions – What is Forgiveness?](#)

a. READ: Romans 8:1

“So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.” NLT

In Romans 8:1 we read the result of God’s forgiveness. We are no longer condemned! Imagine you’re talking with someone who doesn’t feel they need God’s forgiveness. **How might you use Romans 8:1 to help explain why we need God’s forgiveness?**

LEADER NOTE: Romans 8:1 teaches us that in Christ we are no longer condemned. There's a lot implied here about our relationship to God. First, there was a time when we were condemned before Him. God is holy (perfect and without sin). We are sinners. We need God's forgiveness because of our fallen condition (see Romans 3:23) Second, we can be forgiven through what Jesus has done by dying in our place on the cross (see Romans 3:24-25). Those who belong to Christ Jesus are no longer condemned, but have been released from the penalty for our sin, fully forgiven in Him.

b. READ: Colossians 1:13-14

"For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into Kingdom of his dear Son, who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins." NLT

How might you rephrase these verses to help someone understand God's forgiveness? See if you can come up with one or two sentences that capture these ideas.

LEADER NOTE: To get your group members thinking about how to rephrase these verses, have them focus on the verbs, "rescued" and "transferred". According to these verses, we were in the kingdom of darkness, Satan's domain. Then, Jesus rescued us, through His death on the cross. Now we have been moved to a new Kingdom, Jesus' power and reign in our lives. Jesus has redeemed us (purchased us) with His shed blood. That purchase has set us free from sin and death and means we are fully and forever forgiven by God.

c. **We cannot truly forgive others until we accept that we have been forgiven by God. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?**

LEADER NOTE: For followers of Jesus, these two realities, God's forgiveness of us and our forgiveness of others, are inseparable. We cannot understand forgiveness until we have experienced it. For a Christ follower who is struggling to forgive, it can be helpful to think about and thank God for His forgiveness, to allow His forgiveness to saturate our mind and heart.

d. **How does thinking about verses like Romans 8:1 and Colossians 1:13-14 help you appreciate God's forgiveness?**

II. OUR RESPONSE: FORGIVE OTHERS

"To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you."
Lewis Smedes, Forgive and Forget: Healing the Wounds We Don't Deserve

- a. In his statement on forgiveness, Lewis Smedes uses the powerful imagery of a prison door being opened. **How might you know if you're still in prison, or if you've opened the door?**

LEADER NOTE: One of the hard realities of not forgiving others is the harm we do to ourselves. Studies have shown that refusing to forgive can lead to physical illnesses and emotional and mental health challenges. When we forgive, we release ourselves from the self-harm that can come from refusing to let go.

For the follower of Jesus, our response to being forgiven by God should be a willingness to forgive others. We forgive, "just as" we have been forgiven.

- b. 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."

What does it look like to forgive others "just as" we have been forgiven?

LEADER NOTE: It is helpful to think about how God has forgiven us. He initiated the forgiveness. We did nothing to deserve or earn it. The Bible says that while we were God's enemies, Christ died for us (see Romans 5:10). When God forgives us, He satisfies His justice and forgives us fully. There is no longer a barrier between us and Him (see 1 John 1:9). Our forgiveness of another does not have to depend on them changing or being deserving of our forgiveness. Like God, we release them by showing them grace and mercy, from our heart.

III. **FORGIVENESS: A BIBLICAL CHECKLIST**

Thomas Watson, an English Puritan who lived in the 1600s, gives us a biblical checklist to help us forgive from the heart. As a group, take turns reading through each of the following steps and Scripture passages.

What question to you have about these steps?

What do you find helpful about these steps?

- i. Resist revenge:

READ: Romans 12:19

“Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, ‘I will take revenge; I will pay them back,’ says the LORD.” NLT

- ii. Don’t seek to do them mischief: (“mischief” can also be defined as “evil”)

READ: 1 Thessalonians 5:15

“See that no one pays back evil for evil, but always try to do good to each other and to all people.” NLT

- iii. Wish them well and pray for them.

READ: Luke 6:28

“Bless those who curse you. Pray for those who hurt you.” NLT

- iv. Grieve at their calamities.

READ: Proverbs 24:17

“Don’t rejoice when your enemies fall; don’t be happy when they stumble.” NLT

- v. Seek reconciliation with them.

READ: Romans 12:18

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” NIV

- vi. Help them when they are in distress.

READ: Exodus 23:4

“If you come across your enemy’s ox or donkey that has strayed away, take it back to its owner.” NLT

NEXT STEPS

In this study, God may have brought up some old bitterness and unforgiveness you may be walking around with. If so, the question is, are you going to push it back under the rug or deal with it so you can move forward in your journey? While you may be saying, “you don’t know the story” or “what they did to me”, and you are right - God does. Allow him to help you walk through this, and ask him to give strength to put on the new self.

God does not want bitterness and unforgiveness to keep you from experiencing a life of freedom. As you go through this section, ask God to give you the strength to forgive and the power to move into freedom.

1. Share one small “next step” that you feel God is calling you to take in the next 7 days.
2. Pray and write down the names of those you need to forgive.
3. Write a letter/email to the person who wronged you and then pray what to do with it. Note: Sometimes writing down what we would like to say to someone is a great way of releasing bitterness and anger, then throw it away and release them in forgiveness.
 - What is a key takeaway for you from this study?

PRAYER:

This week let’s pray for our Celebrate Recovery (CR) ministry at Creekside. CR is a Christ centred recovery ministry, helping people to recover from hurts, habits and hang-ups. Here are some requests from our CR leadership.

- Pray that our participants would continue to engage in community and stay accountable.
- That we would continue to engage many on Friday Night Live each week as well as those who watch it after. That God would speak to them in a way that would compel them to move and grow.
- That we would continue to support each other well - whether utilizing our services or directing them to others who can support them better.