

LEADER GUIDE – SESSION 3

About this session: FORGIVENESS

Due to the nature of this week's topic, it may feel more vulnerable to talk about. Forgiveness is often a struggle in relationships and the lack of it can even exacerbate an issue. Some people may also have deep wounds that have been with them for a long time. Others may have fresh pain from current relationships. These may be difficult to discuss but it does not mean God won't bring healing to their pain, even during your time together.

Be sure to do your part to prepare for the meeting by watching the video, reviewing the questions, and praying for your group. While this may have the potential to be a heavy discussion, ask God to guide you and your group members in having a life-giving conversation. Be sure to pray for your group beforehand and trust the Holy Spirit to work through your time together. It's through community that God often brings transformation to our lives!

The "Guide to Forgiveness"

In this week's video, Pastor John talks about the Four Stages of Forgiveness. The second page of the participant's guide includes a simple walkthrough to accompany those four stages of forgiveness. This is meant to be something that group members can keep and work through on their own time with the Lord. Be sure to mention it and encourage anyone to go on the journey of forgiveness where it's needed.

Getting Started

If your group just started for this series, then you're in your third week of meeting together. Yay! That might not seem like much time but you may start noticing people feel more comfortable and a little more willing to open up. If your group has already had the time to build relationships, keep the icebreaker shorter by just doing it in pairs so you have more time in the Talk About It section.

**Ice Breaker: Who is someone you have looked up to, whether as a child or recently, and why?
(If your group is large, answer this question in groups of 2-3)**

Give a time limit to keep it brief

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Take It In (Watch the Video):

- *write out your notes*

Talk About it!

Remember... This is just a tool to facilitate discussion. Use the provided questions and ask the Holy Spirit to guide the group during this time to bring about a fruitful conversation that will help everyone in the group to grow as disciples of Jesus -- feel no pressure to answer all of them

1. How have you seen forgiveness or unforgiveness impact relationships? What are some negative effects when people do not forgive?
2. Read **Psalm 86:5** and **Psalm 32:1-2**
 - a. How has the forgiveness of God impacted your life and how has it brought healing to you?
3. Read **Colossians 3:13** and **Ephesians 4:31-32**
 - a. What do you think it means to forgive others as you have been forgiven? How easy or difficult has that been for you to do? What makes it easy or difficult to forgive someone?
4. Read **Proverbs 17:9** and **Proverbs 18:19**
 - a. Has there ever been a time when someone has forgiven you? How did that impact you?
 - b. Can you share about a time when you had to dig deep and forgive someone? What was that like and how did it affect your life?
5. Sometimes family patterns keep us from forgiving, i.e. stonewalling, grudges, weaponizing the past
 - a. What is one pattern that you have recognized in your own family that you would like to break free from? What decision(s) do you need to make in order for that to happen?
6. Injury, sin, and hurt will happen in our relationships but our response is our responsibility.
 - a. Do you think forgiveness needs to happen right away? Why or why not?
7. Is there anyone that you need to forgive? Or anyone in your life to whom you need to apologize?
 - a. Take time to pray for God's love and forgiveness to be present in your relationships.