

Why God?

Why does God ask me to forgive someone for a heinous sin?

TALK IT OVER

Key Scripture

“14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” – Matthew 6:14-15 (ESV)

“32 ‘If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.’” – Luke 6:32-36 (ESV)

“25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. 28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. 29 Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. 32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” – Ephesians 4:25 – 5:2 (ESV)

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Start Talking: Find a conversation starter for your group. (15 Min)

- What would be something that would be hard for you to forgive or get over?
- Is forgiving the same as forgetting?

Head: Start Thinking. Ask a question to get your group thinking. (10 Min)

- Read Ephesians 4:25-5:2. Who are we to be like? Whose sins did Jesus forgive? Did Jesus just forgive some sins or all sins?
- Read Luke 6:32-36. How is forgiveness like giving without expecting repayment?

Heart: Start Sharing. Choose a question to create openness. (10 Min)

- Do you think God loves everyone? Even someone who has committed terrible and destructive crimes? (*1 Tim. 2:4, Lk. 15:11-32, Lk. 23:43*)
- Why does God ask us to forgive someone for a heinous sin? Why might it hard to explain that to new Christians or unbelievers?
- Is giving someone the benefit of the doubt, or “overlooking the offense” (*Pr. 19:11*) similar to forgiveness? Yes or no?
- Do you think it is even possible for us to forgive like God forgives?
- What is the witness that unbelievers around us receive when they see us forgive someone who doesn’t deserve it?

Hands: Start Doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week. (10 Min)

- Do you ever doubt that you’re really forgiven? That’s what Satan wants. Come to worship this weekend, and hear the words “You are forgiven” – and trust God that it is so!
- Who is it that you need to make an intentional decision to forgive, in spite of not wanting to? Ask God for the help to do it!

Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power. (15 Min)

- For suggestions on structuring prayer time, see the *Group Prayer Ideas* page in this packet.

Trios: Split into same-gender groups of three. (15 Min)

1. What’s a passage of scripture that has impacted you this week? Read it to the group and explain why.
2. Is there anything God is leading you to repent of?
3. How’s your weekly 3-2-1 challenge going? (*3 Conversations with New People, Learn 2 Names, Make 1 Meaningful Connection*)
4. Who is one non-believer that you need to reach out to this week?
5. What’s something you’d like someone else to check in with you about this week?
6. Pray for one another.