

God's Love and Forgiveness

11-12-2023

Icebreaker

What is the hardest thing you have ever had to forgive someone for? —OR—

What is the greatest personal example of love you have ever experienced? (Besides God's deliverance through Christ)

Step 1 - GET REAL

What are you thankful for from the past week?

What struggles did you face?

What can you share from your personal Bible reading? (other than the designated reading)

Where did you see God in your daily life?

Step 2: GET FED

Scripture

Love

John 3:16-17 (ESV) ¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Romans 5:6-8 (ESV) ⁶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ **but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

John 15:12-13 (ESV) ¹² "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ **Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.**

1 John 3:16-18 (ESV) ¹⁶ By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. ¹⁷ But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? ¹⁸ Little children, **let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.**

Forgiveness

Luke 23:34 (ESV) ³⁴ And Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." And they cast lots to divide his garments.

Ephesians 4:32 (ESV) ³² Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Matthew 6:14-15 (ESV) 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 18:21-22 (ESV) ²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" ²² Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but **seventy-seven times.**

Matthew 18:32-35 (ESV) ³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵ **So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."**

1 John 1:9 (ESV) ⁹ If we confess our sins, **he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Matthew 5:43-48 (ESV) ⁴³ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' ⁴⁴ But I say to you, **Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,** ⁴⁵ **so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven.** For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶ For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸ You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Questions

Love

How much does God love us? (John 3:16; 15:12-13)

How did He show love? (Rom 5:6-8)

To what extent should we love others? (John 15:13, 1 John 3:16)

How are we to show our love to others? (1 John 3:16-18)

What was the ultimate example of forgiveness? (Luke 23:34) How are love and forgiveness related?

For whom would you give your life? Anyone?

How are we to feel/act toward our enemies? (Matt 5:43-48) How hard is it for us to love difficult people, much less our enemies? What can we do that will make it easier to love our enemies?

Forgive

How are we to forgive? (Eph 4:32)

What happens if we do not forgive? (Matt 6:14-15)

How many times are we to forgive our brother? (Matt 18:21) What does this mean? How hard is it for us to forgive someone multiple times for the same offense? What excuse are we likely to give in this case?

How are we to forgive according to Matt 18:35?

What is God faithful to do for us? (1 John 1:9) Does God place a restriction on this forgiveness? How hard is it for us to believe this sometimes?

How hard is it to forgive? What is the best way to forgive someone?

Who is the ultimate example of both love and forgiveness? What attitude does it take on our part to be more like Him in each respect?

Step 3: GET ACTIVE

Meditate on what it means to love enough to lay down our life for a friend.

Think of someone you need to forgive and forgive them. Tell them you have done so and why.

Take someone you find difficult to love to lunch.