# DIVING DEEPER DISCUSSION GUIDE

## TEXT SUMMARY

In Ephesians 1:7–10, Paul unfolds the riches of God's grace: "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses…" Forgiveness is not a small or peripheral doctrine; it is central to the Lord's Prayer, the Lord's Table, and the Christian's daily walk (Matt. 6; Matt. 26; 1 John 1). God's forgiveness is grounded in Christ's sacrificial death and promised throughout Scripture (Psa. 103; Jer. 31). Because God has forgiven us in Christ (indicative), we are commanded to forgive one another (imperative) (Eph. 4:32). An unforgiving spirit contradicts the very character of God and reveals a failure to grasp how deeply we ourselves have been forgiven.

## INTRODUCTION (OBSERVATION):

1. Read Ephesians 1:3–10.
   - What words or phrases in vv. 7–8 describe the *measure* and *manner* of God's forgiveness ("according to the riches of his grace," "lavished upon us")?
   - What does that suggest about God's heart?
2. Read Ephesians 4:1, then 4:25–32. In v. 1 Paul urges believers to "walk in a manner worthy of the calling."
   - What kinds of behaviors does he contrast with that worthy walk in vv. 25–31?
   - How does v. 32 ("forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you") function as a summary or climax to this section?
3. Key assertion: Compare Ephesians 1:7 and 4:32. Paul repeats one core idea in two different ways:
   - 1:7: "In him we have… the forgiveness of our trespasses…"
   - 4:32: "…forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

What is the central truth about forgiveness that appears in both places?

## SO WHAT? (APPLICATION):

In Scripture, forgiveness is not God deciding that sin "doesn't matter"; it is God absolving the sinner because Christ has borne the judgment our sins deserve. Read 1 John 1:8–10.

- What happens when we deny our sin?
- What happens when we confess it?

The sermon quoted Witsius describing forgiveness as God's declaration that, because of Christ's satisfaction, the sinner will not suffer the punishment he deserves.

- How does that deepen your understanding of "forgiveness," beyond just "God overlooking it"?

Reflect:

- How often do you intentionally recall specific ways God has forgiven you?
- How might more frequent reflection on God's forgiveness change your attitude toward others' sins against you?

Our forgiveness of one another: Paul moves from *indicative* ("God in Christ forgave you") to *imperative* ("forgiving one another"). Jesus and Stephen model forgiving even in the face of intense suffering (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:59–60).

- What does an unforgiving spirit reveal about how much (or how little) we have grasped God's forgiveness of us?

Wrestling honestly with the difficulty: For many, the greatest barrier to obedience here is not misunderstanding the command but the *pain* of the offense.

- What reasons do people commonly give for not forgiving (e.g., depth of hurt, ongoing consequences, seriousness of sin)?
- How do the examples of Jesus ("Father, forgive them…") and Stephen ("Lord, do not hold this sin against them") speak into situations of severe offense or long-term hurt?
    - How can we affirm both: that some sins cause real, lasting damage, and that God still calls us to forgive?