

Go Deeper

Disciple Group Leader Guide

FORGIVENESS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Based on Luke 17:1, 3-5

Opening

Last week we talked about being generous to make a difference. This week, we're looking at another way followers of Jesus are called to live differently: forgiveness. Jesus never promised that we wouldn't be hurt or offended. In fact, He said, "Offenses will certainly come." The question isn't whether we'll experience offense, but what we'll do with it when it comes. Forgiveness doesn't mean pretending the hurt wasn't real or saying what happened was okay. It means choosing to release the debt to God and refusing to allow someone else's actions to control the condition of our hearts.

Ice Breaker

What's something you've found surprisingly difficult to forgive - a small thing, not necessarily something deeply personal?

Opening Prayer

Ask God to give the group open hearts and honesty as they discuss forgiveness. Pray for anyone carrying hurt, anger, or offense and ask God to give everyone the faith and courage needed to surrender those things to Him.

Read Together

Luke 17:1, 3-5

(Optional: Ask several group members to read portions.)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

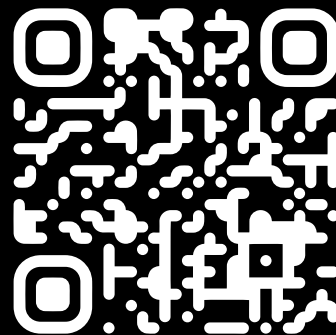
08.23.26
Grow Class

08.30.26
Baptism Sunday

09.02.26
Ladies Event

10.07.26
Mens Event

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TURNING POINT

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. Offense Is Inevitable, but Living Offended Is Optional.

Jesus didn't say offenses might come. He said they will come. People will hurt us, disappoint us, betray us, and sometimes deeply wound us. We can't always control what happens to us, but we can choose how we respond.

2. Forgiveness Doesn't Mean What Happened Was Okay.

Forgiveness doesn't minimize the offense, deny the damage, or pretend the pain wasn't real. We can't forgive something we're unwilling to acknowledge.

3. Forgiveness Means Releasing the Debt.

When someone hurts us, we can spend our lives trying to collect what we believe they owe us. Forgiveness means releasing our right to collect that debt and placing it in God's hands.

4. Forgiveness Costs Something

Forgiveness may be free to the person receiving it, but it costs the person giving it. The ultimate example is Jesus, who absorbed the cost of our sin at the cross.

Discussion Questions

When Offense Comes: Luke 17:1, 3–5

Jesus tells His disciples that offenses will come.

- *Why do you think Jesus was so direct about the reality of offense?*
- *Why is it sometimes easier to hold onto an offense than to release it?*
- *What's the difference between being hurt by something and choosing to live offended?*
- *How can an offense begin to affect other areas of our lives?*

What Forgiveness Is and Isn't: Luke 10:33–34

The message makes it clear that forgiveness doesn't mean pretending something didn't happen.

- *Why do you think people sometimes misunderstand what forgiveness means?*
- *Why doesn't forgiving someone mean that trust is automatically restored?*

Releasing the Debt: *Romans 12:19*

The message describes unforgiveness as continuing to collect a debt from someone who hurt us.

- *Why can it be difficult to surrender the situation to God?*
- *What does it look like practically to say, "God, I'm putting this in Your hands"?*

Go Deeper

Forgiving Because We've Been Forgiven: *Colossians 3:13*

We've all needed God's mercy. Remembering what Jesus has forgiven in us changes the way we respond to the failures of others.

- *Why is it easier sometimes to say, "I'll pray for you," than to get involved?*
- *What might generosity cost you this week—time, money, convenience, comfort, or something else?*

Saved People Serve People: *2 Corinthians 9:7*

We don't serve to earn God's love. We serve because we've already received His love. We don't give so God will love us; we give because He already does.

- *How has experiencing God's forgiveness changed the way you view other people's mistakes?*
- *What makes extending grace difficult?*

Sermon Truth

- Forgiveness doesn't erase what happened; it releases our right to carry the debt and places it in God's hands. We forgive because we have been forgiven, and we refuse to allow someone else's offense to have the final word over our hearts.

Leader Insight

- This topic can become very personal very quickly. Give people permission to be honest without pressuring anyone to share details of their situation. Be careful not to communicate that forgiveness means reconciliation, restored trust, or remaining in an unsafe relationship.

Application

Ask each person to answer one or more of the following:

- What challenged you most from this week's message?
- *Is there an offense you're still carrying?*
- *What "debt" are you still wanting someone to pay?*
- *What would it look like to release that debt to God?*
- *Is there a step of forgiveness God is asking you to take?*

Memory Verse: Colossians 3:13

"Bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if anyone has a grievance against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive."

Closing Challenge

Don't let someone else's offense determine the condition of your heart. This week: Name the offense. Be honest about what happened. Identify the debt. What are you still wanting that person to pay? Release the debt to God. Choose to surrender what happened to Him. Ask God to redeem what was broken. Forgiveness may be a process rather than a one-time decision. When the memory comes back, surrender it again.

This Week's Challenge

Spend time this week praying over one offense you're still carrying.

- What am I still holding onto?
- What am I wanting this person to pay?
- Then do something about it.

Closing Reflection

Before you leave, take a moment to quietly reflect:

- *Who has God placed in front of me that I need to see?*
- *Where have I been too busy or too comfortable to stop?*
- *What would it look like for me to release that debt to You?*

Then ask God to show you what He can do through what happened.

Closing Prayer

God, thank You for the forgiveness and mercy You have given us through Jesus. You know every wound, every offense, every betrayal, and every place where we have been hurt. Help us be honest about what happened without allowing the offense to control our hearts. Give us the faith to release the debts we have been trying to collect and place them in Your hands. Help us forgive because we have been forgiven. Heal what has been broken, redeem what has been painful, and give us the strength to respond differently because of what You have done for us. Help us become people who don't just receive Your grace but extend it to others. Amen.

Leader Notes

- Create a safe space. This topic may bring up deep personal wounds. Never pressure someone to share details.
- Don't minimize the hurt. Forgiveness doesn't mean saying the offense wasn't serious or pretending it didn't happen.
- Keep forgiveness and reconciliation distinct. Forgiving someone doesn't automatically mean trusting them again or removing appropriate boundaries.
- Listen more than you teach. Give people room to process instead of feeling like you need to provide an answer for every situation.
- Point people toward Jesus. The foundation of our forgiveness toward others is the forgiveness we've received from Christ.
- Encourage process, not perfection. Someone may need to surrender the same offense to God more than once as memories and emotions return.
- **Leader Reminder: our role is to facilitate discussion, not deliver the sermon again. Keep the group rooted in Scripture, allow people space to respond, and help them identify a practical next step.**