

SMALL GROUPS

Leader Conversation Guide - How do I forgive?

Main Idea:

Forgiveness is at the heart of the Gospel. As sinners who have been freely forgiven through Jesus, we are also called to forgive others—even when it feels impossible. Jesus' example on the cross shows us that forgiveness isn't about excusing sin, but about choosing freedom and reflecting God's love.

Make It Practical:

- **Pray for those who hurt you.**
 - Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them" even as He was mocked and crucified.
 - Prayer may not change the other person, but it always changes us.
 - Start small: pray "God, do something in their life," and grow toward praying God's blessings over them.
- **Forgive as you've been forgiven.**
 - We forgive not because people deserve it, but because we've been forgiven much by God (Colossians 3:13).
 - Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling—it's letting go of bitterness and releasing people from debt.
 - Forgiveness may save a marriage, heal a friendship, or set you free from years of bondage.
- **Bitterness vs. Freedom.**

- Bitterness is like poison—it hurts you more than the offender.
- When you forgive, you release the weight that’s been holding you captive.
- The prisoner you set free is yourself.

Talk About It:

1. What part of Jesus’ example on the cross stood out to you the most?
2. Why is praying for those who hurt us often the first step toward forgiveness?
3. Can you think of a time when praying for someone began to change your own heart?
4. How do you reconcile forgiving someone when you don’t feel like it?
5. Why is it so powerful to remember how much God has forgiven us?
6. What are some symptoms of bitterness that you’ve seen in your life or others’ lives?
7. What’s one practical step you can take this week to begin forgiving someone?

Prayer:

Jesus, thank You for showing us forgiveness on the cross. Help us to release bitterness, to pray for those who hurt us, and to forgive as You have forgiven us. Give us strength where we feel weak, and let forgiveness bring freedom to our hearts. Amen.

Leader Tips:

- Remind your group that forgiveness is a process—be patient with those who are struggling.
- Encourage honesty but guard confidentiality to build trust.
- Share your own journey of forgiveness to spark openness.
- Avoid rushing people to “get over it”; point them to prayer and God’s grace.
- Emphasize that forgiveness brings freedom—not just to the offender, but to the forgiver.

Forgiveness is not about what others deserve—it’s about reflecting the grace you’ve already received.