



SMALL GROUP NOTES

**MAY 1/2, 2010
WEEK THREE
SPEAKER: PASTOR
JEFF MCNAIRN
FORGIVENESS**

Open It

"Forgiveness is a lovely idea until you have someone to forgive" – C.S. Lewis

- * On a scale of 1-10 (1 = painfree / 10 = excruciating) – how easy is it for you to forgive someone when they ask you. How about when they don't ask for forgiveness?
- * What things irritate you most in other people – what things would you have a hard time overlooking in a long-term relationship?
- * What would be one of the hardest things for you to forgive?
- * If you feel safe to share – tell your group about a time in your life when you really struggled with offering forgiveness OR share a story of someone you know or have heard about whose example of forgiveness is inspiring for you.

Talk About It

- * In the movie 'Invictus' Nelson Mandela says, "forgiveness liberates the soul and removes fear." Why is that?
- * In your own words how would you define forgiveness?
- * Does forgiving another mean that we also have to forget what they did to us?
- * Timothy Keller in his book "Prodigal God" (an amazing read I might add) says that forgiveness is costly to the one who offers it. Agree/ Disagree? Why?
- * Max Lucado in his book, 'Just Like Jesus' says that we have three responses when we are hurt – we can flee, fight, or forgive – what's wrong with the first two responses?

Dig Into It

Read Matthew 18:21-35

- * Anything about this passage that speaks to you or jumps out? Anything you don't understand?
- * What is Jesus trying to tell us about forgiveness in this parable?
- * Why would we be more forgiving if we had a better grasp on how much God has forgiven us?



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Read verse 35 (see also Matthew 6:14-15) – these are some pretty harsh words

- * What does Jesus mean by them? Is this hyperbole?
- * Why is Jesus telling us that it is not possible for us to really know God's pity and at the same time be hardhearted towards others?
- * Why can't God overlook a person's refusal to show mercy? Why is Jesus so adamant about forgiving others?

Read Matthew 6:12

- * Why is forgiveness so important in God's economy?

Read or summarize story - Luke 15:11-31

- * Most Bible's title this story as – "The Parable of the Lost Son" – do you agree that it should really read – "The Parable of the Two Lost Sons"?
- * In the message on the weekend the speaker suggested that the elder son was just as lost as the younger – would you agree/disagree? Why?
- * What were some of the issues that the elder brother may have been dealing with in respect to his brother?
- * Who was Jesus telling this parable to? How do you think the different parties who heard it would have related to the story?
- * John Stott says, "If we have an exaggerated view of the offenses of others, it proves that we have minimized our own." How is this true of the elder brother? Would this ever be true of your own life?

Read Colossians 3:13

Read Psalm 103:10-14 and Jeremiah 31:34

- * What do these verses tell us about God's forgiveness? What speaks to your heart about these verses?

Apply It

(many of these questions are very personal so share only as you feel comfortable)

- * Is there anyone in your life that you need to extend forgiveness to?
- * Is there any area in your life where you can relate with the elder brother (Luke 15 – i.e. resentment, jealousy, anger, bitterness, etc) ? If so, ask God to forgive you of this attitude and to help you change.
- * Is there any area in your life today that you can be an agent of forgiveness and/or reconciliation? In other words, are there any relationships in your life where you can help facilitate forgiveness/ reconciliation between people other than yourself? (for example, you have two colleagues that just can't get along – or you have a sibling that's at odds with you parents, etc.)

Pray Together

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