

# Small Group Curriculum

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4/14/13

1. Think about a time when you offended someone and they were slow to forgive you. What feelings did you wrestle with? If that person eventually forgave you, what did you feel then? If that person refused to forgive you, how did you deal with it?
2. Why is forgiveness necessary for a family or community to survive? Is forgiveness ever harmful?
3. Read Matthew 18:21-35. Jesus used hyperbolic language to explain to Peter that a Christ-follower's obligation to forgive outstrips all cultural expectations. In our society, when does forgiving seem impractical or even foolish?
4. Pastor Derek noted the first servant's debt was impossibly high, worth 1/3 the value of the treasury in Rome. Why did Jesus build his story with such a staggering figure instead of using an amount more true to life? What impact does Jesus' story have on Peter's project of discerning how much forgiveness is enough?
5. Read Ephesians 4:31-32. Paul describes forgiveness as a choice that one makes before he or she is offended. How can "pre-choosing" forgiveness help when forgiving is hard?
6. What does forgiveness cost the offended party?
7. Christian author Lewis Smedes argues that every hurt doesn't need to be forgiven. Annoyances, defeats, and slights just need to be gotten over. Smedes argues that it's the disloyal acts and the betrayals that require forgiveness. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why?
8. According to Matthew 5:23-26, who is responsible to initiate the process of forgiveness? Read Matthew 18:15-20. In this passage who is responsible to initiate the process? When we put these passages together, what do we learn about our obligation to repair broken relationships?
9. Pastor Derek noted that sometimes people rush through the act of forgiveness to avoid painful conversations and that other people hold onto a grievance so long that it turns to bitterness. What's your tendency? Do you tend to forgive too quickly or too slowly? What safeguards should people slow to forgive put in place? How about people who are too quick to forgive?
10. Based on the passages we've read tonight, what are the theological reasons to forgive someone?
11. Read Hebrews 12:15. How can a lack of forgiveness damage you?
12. Read Matt 5:44. How can praying for our enemies change how we perceive them?
13. Read 1 Peter 3:9-10. How can negatively talking about those who offend us lock us into a posture of unforgiveness?
14. Read Romans 1:2. When you are struggling with forgiveness, what mental choices do you need to make?
15. Read Romans 12:8. How might doing acts of kindness to the person who offended us make us more likely to forgive them?