

Praying for Forgiveness | Matthew 6:12-13 Sermon Discussion Participant's Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To identify one reason it is difficult for you to forgive.

Sermon Refresher: Dave explored how each of us is tempted by the evil one to sin, and yet God forgives us. Jesus calls us, to forgive the sins of others as God forgives us.

Icebreaker: How do you think people in our culture view forgiveness? Do they see it as necessary? Unnecessary? Healthy? Weak? Irrelevant?

Transition: Today, forgiveness is *not* a hot topic, but it is pressingly relevant as issues of justice, poverty, abuse, gender roles, and race come into the cultural foreground. No matter what your personal opinion is on any one of these issues, it is obvious that people have been hurt. This is also true in our personal lives! We've all been hurt (to greater or lesser degrees) and we all face the same question: what's next?

Discussion:

1. Describe the different kinds of responses people have when you hurt them. How do you want them to respond?
2. Describe the different ways you respond when you've been harmed.
3. Read Matthew 18:23-35:

“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay

what you owe.’ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

Put yourself in the shoes of the unforgiving servant. Why do you think he demanded the other servant to pay him back?

4. What does the servant’s lack of forgiveness show us about his heart?

5. In Dave’s sermon he said,

“Jesus is saying that you were offered forgiveness, but you would not offer it. You were granted mercy, but you would not grant it. You were given grace, but you would not give it. You were offered the economy of love, but you have chosen the economy of debt. So have it your way.”

Why is picking the “economy of love” so challenging when we’re hurt?

6. How can you remind yourself that Jesus gave you forgiveness, mercy, and grace the next time you’re hurt?

Sharing and Prayer: In Dave’s sermon, he challenged us to identify someone whom we are finding it difficult to forgive. Break into groups of two or three, and share (perhaps without names) whom you are find difficult to forgive, and why. Once you’re finished sharing, pray this sentence, “Father, help me to forgive _____, as you have forgiven me.”