

Community Study

Session 5 Questions

Ice-breaker: Can you share about a time you got into trouble as a child and you were shown grace and forgiveness by your parents/guardians?

1. How would you rate yourself when it comes to being a forgiving person? On a scale of 1-10 (1 for being unforgiving and 10 being someone who effortlessly forgives), how do you rate?

What factors in your life have influenced this tendency?

2. When you see someone who easily offers forgiveness, what factors do you think make the person that way?

Do you think you've ever offered someone forgiveness too quickly (as suggested in the reading)? Explain.

3. What do you think makes someone unwilling to forgive?

Have you ever withheld forgiveness? What did you want to gain by delaying your forgiveness? What was the result?

4. Do you think it's permissible to withhold forgiveness if someone doesn't think they need to be forgiven? Why or why not?

It's been said that "Unforgiveness is like drinking poison yourself and waiting for the other person to die." Have you found that to be true? What does withholding forgiveness do to people? Have you ever experienced this?

It is important here to make the distinction between forgiveness and reconciliation. Forgiveness is always possible, because it is in our power to grant. Reconciliation is not always possible, because that requires both to agree, which doesn't always happen. Paul's words in Romans are helpful:

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 12.18

We can and should get to the point where we harbor no unforgiveness; but we cannot always reconcile our differences.

5. Read Jesus' words to Peter in Matthew 18.21-35. According to Jesus, what are the appropriate limits to forgiveness (vs. 21,22)?

Do you struggle with Jesus' story?

How do these words strike you?

6. Do you think God wants us to just randomly conjure up forgiveness or is there more to it than that?

Is forgiveness more of a process?

How helpful is it for you to remember the great debt we have been forgiven by God when it comes to how we go about practicing forgiveness?