GROUP ICE BREAKER

What summer plans are you making that you’re most excited about?

REVIEW LAST WEEK’S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will make this request of Jesus starting today, “Lord, teach me to pray.”
- I will gratefully acknowledge how God has met my daily needs.
- I will bring to God my physical and spiritual needs in prayer.

MESSAGE SUMMARY

How motivated are you to extend grace to your debtors, to people who have sinned against you? To be very clear about what Jesus thinks about this, we looked at a single word; “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” Jesus is making a correlation between the way you treat debtors and the way God will treat you.

Jesus told a story in Matthew 18, of two servants and a king who is lavishly generous and painstakingly just. The first servant accumulated a mountain of unpayable debt before him, but one day the king said, “You owe. I’ll pay.” We owe everything to grace. The first servant never asked for grace and when it was given there was no desire to make right whatever he could. When you want to be forgiven, you want to set right anything you can, not to earn it, but because that’s part of reconciliation.

You’re the biggest debtor you know. And in light of that, to withhold grace from another debtor is just unthinkable. Whenever people see someone who claims to be in the kingdom of God withhold forgiveness, they ought to be outraged. When grace is withheld in your community, in your church, in your family, do you get outraged? Do you talk to the king about it? Do you do everything in your power to make sure we live together in grace and forgiveness? Or do you just get used to gracelessness?

To forgive someone does not mean to excuse or tolerate wrongdoing. It doesn’t mean doing what the other person wants you to do. It doesn’t mean putting up with that which is not to be put up with. Forgiving does not mean allowing that behavior to go on or to have it be unconfronted. It may not even mean to reconcile with someone. Forgiving them means you give up the right to hurt them back, and you wish them well before God, and you can do that.
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What images do the words “debt” and debtors” bring to your mind?

2. How motivated are you to extend grace to your debtors, to people who have sinned against you?

3. Read Psalm 103:1-5 and Micah 7:18-19. Discuss what these passages teach about God’s forgiveness.

4. Read Ephesians 4:30-32 and Colossians 3:12-15. Discuss what these passages teach about forgiving others.

5. Read Matthew 18:32-35. Why does Jesus make such a strong connection between receiving God’s forgiveness and extending it to others?

6. Without giving specifics, is there a person or a circumstance that challenges your willingness to forgive? How do Jesus’ words impact this situation for you? What is one thing you can do this week to move towards forgiveness?
NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will give up the right to hurt people back, and wish them well before God.
- I will extend forgiveness to my debtors.
- I will do everything in my power to make sure we live together in grace and forgiveness?

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

- Matthew 6:12
- Matthew 18:21-35

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

- A Deeper Look At the Sermon on the Mount: Living Out the Way of Jesus, John Stott

PRAYER REQUESTS

Take time to share how you can be praying for each other over the next week: