

Made for More Unless You Forgive

Unforgiveness produces torture; forgiveness yields freedom (Matthew 18:21-35). When we become followers of Jesus, we are forgiven a spiritual debt we could never pay. It is because we have been forgiven much that we can and should forgive others. When we refuse to extend forgiveness to someone, it is a significant act of dishonor against God and against the forgiveness we have received from Him. Unforgiveness gives the enemy the right to torment our lives, to keep us in bondage and to keep us from the abundant life God offers us. On the other hand, walking in forgiveness is incredibly liberating. Forgiveness is a deliberate choice, not a feeling. It does not require trust, nor does it mean we forget. But for those who desire lasting freedom, forgiveness is not optional.

GET THINGS STARTED

What did God show you this past week through the *Purify Workbook*? What fears have kept you from experiencing freedom in Jesus? What symptoms of fear are most common for you?

How have you seen the idea of an *eye for an eye* or *tooth for a tooth* play out in a relationship or situation when a perceived injustice occurred? What was the outcome?

WATCH TESTIMONY VIDEO: WEEK 8

GO DEEPER

1. In Matthew 18:21-22, what point was Jesus making when He answered Peter's question on how many times Peter should forgive his brother who sins against him?
2. What are the consequences of unforgiveness, according to Matthew 18:32-35? How should we read and understand the connection between our forgiveness of others and God's forgiveness of us in Matthew 6:14-15, and why is that connection important?
3. Rodney Hogue, in his book *Forgiveness*, makes the point that *we become the victims when we refuse to forgive*. How does unforgiveness make us *victims*, instead of punishing those who have hurt us? How do we torment ourselves with unforgiveness?
4. What does Pastor David mean that forgiveness is a *choice* and not a *feeling*? What does it look like to forgive someone even if we still hurt or are experiencing negative thoughts and emotions? If in the process of walking out forgiveness we must repeatedly choose to forgive, does that suggest that we have not fully forgiven?

MAKE IT PERSONAL

1. Are you holding on to unforgiveness towards someone? If so, what is the situation, and what has unforgiveness produced in you? What has kept you from stepping into forgiveness?
2. If you have held on to unforgiveness, what is the first step you need to take towards forgiveness? How will you know if you have truly forgiven that person who has hurt you?
3. How has forgiveness possibly led you to immeasurable freedom and release? What did your forgiveness process look like? How would you describe your level of trust in those relationships at this point where you have chosen to forgive?

PRACTICE IT NOW

Take time as a group, in prayer, to ask God for the courage to embrace forgiveness. Ask Him to show you if there is any measure of unforgiveness within you towards a specific person. And ask Him to help you to choose forgiveness, even if your thoughts and feelings are not fully there. Thank God for the forgiveness He has given you for a debt you could never pay. Pray over those in your group who may be struggling to begin the process of forgiving someone who has deeply hurt them.

PURIFY WORKBOOK – FOR THIS WEEK

Session 8: Forgiveness – Dealing with the Hurt and Trauma of Your Life