

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

“Forgive Us Our Debts as We Have Forgiven Our Debtors”

Pray Series

February 3/4, 2018

Main Idea:

God has forgiven us, prompting us to forgive others.

Discovery Questions

1. When you were a kid, did you ever hold a grudge against someone, or have someone hold a grudge against you over (what you realize now) an insignificant issue? Describe that situation to the group. How, if ever, did that situation get resolved?

This week, we continue our series on the Lord’s Prayer. As we continue studying the section of prayer where we ask for our needs, this week we’ll look at forgiveness – both our need for it and our need to extend it to others. Let’s start by looking at a few passages in Scripture.

2. Read Matthew 6:12, Matthew 6:14-15 and Matthew 18:21-35. What do we learn about God’s provision in these passages?

3. a. What are some of the messages we hear in the world about forgiveness? (Think especially of recent events in Hollywood.)

b. What reasons do people give for why they can’t forgive others?

c. Have you ever witnessed an act of forgiveness that really stood out to you? Describe that situation to your group. How did it impact you?

4. a. In your own life, have you ever struggled in the past with “unforgiveness” towards someone? If so, as appropriate, describe that situation to the group and the effect that refusing to forgive had on you.

b. As you think of the times you have forgiven others of serious wrongs against you, how were you able to get to the place of forgiveness? Was there something you did or thought about that helped you truly forgive someone of their offense?

c. Is there a situation right now where you’re struggling to forgive someone? What do you think could help you extend forgiveness to them? What would stand in the way of that?

5. Jesus makes it clear that part of the reason we must forgive others is because we have been forgiven ourselves. What could you do daily to remind yourself of how much Jesus has forgiven you? How do you think that would help you in Question #4, part “c”?

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Leader Guide

- 1. When you were a kid, did you ever hold a grudge against someone, or have someone hold a grudge against you over (what you realize now) an insignificant issue? Describe that situation to the group. How, if ever, did that situation get resolved?**

This is a “lighter” question designed to get the conversation going. Spend about 5-7 minutes on this question.

This week, we continue our series on the Lord’s Prayer. As we continue studying the section of prayer where we ask for our needs, this week we’ll look at forgiveness – both our need for it and our need to extend it to others. Let’s start by looking at a few passages in Scripture.

- 2. Read Matthew 6:12, Matthew 6:14-15 and Matthew 18:21-35. What do we learn about God’s provision in these passages?**

Matthew 18:21-35 illustrates the principle behind Matthew 6:12 and Matthew 6:14-15: When we understand and acknowledge that God has forgiven us of so much, it motivates us to forgive others of what is (relatively) little in comparison.

Matthew 18:21-35 is a parable. The “King” represents God, the first servant represents a (supposed) follower of Jesus, and the second servant represents someone we might be struggling to forgive. Jesus’ point in this parable is that our King has forgiven us of an enormous “debt,” our sin has incurred this debt towards God, which God freely forgives when we admit our sinfulness. (The 10,000 bags of gold in this parable is an astronomical amount of money—it’s like owing a national debt amount of money.) Since God has forgiven us of so much, it is “wicked” to not forgive someone else of (relatively) so little.

In your discussion about forgiveness, it’s important to remember what forgiveness is not: It’s not saying someone didn’t do something wrong. It’s also not putting ourselves in a position where we can get wronged again (the King in the parable, for example, would likely never loan the servant money again), or in a position where we could be physically hurt. It’s simply relinquishing our right to make someone pay for what they’ve done.

Spend 10-12 minutes on this question.

- 3. a. What are some of the messages we hear in the world about forgiveness? (Think especially of recent events in Hollywood.)**
b. What reasons do people give for why they can’t forgive others?
c. Have you ever witnessed an act of forgiveness that really stood out to you? Describe that situation to your group. How did it impact you?

The world around us seems to believe that there is a “limit” to forgiveness. We can forgive a person maybe once or twice, but not three or four times. There’s also the idea that there are

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some offenses that can be forgiven, but there are others that are too horrible to ever deserve forgiveness. The reason for these “limits” is because our world also values getting even / getting revenge; making people pay for what they have done to us. People believe (wrongly) that forgiving someone means you’re saying that they didn’t do anything wrong. They also feel as though forgiveness means that you have to put yourself in a position to get wronged again.

Spend 7-10 minutes on this question in its entirety.

4.
 - a. **In your own life, have you ever struggled in the past with “unforgiveness” towards someone? If so, as appropriate, describe that situation to the group and the effect that refusing to forgive had on you.**
 - b. **As you think of the times you have forgiven others of serious wrongs against you, how were you able to get to the place of forgiveness? Was there something you did or thought about that helped you truly forgive someone of their offense?**
 - c. **Is there a situation right now where you’re struggling to forgive someone? What do you think could help you extend forgiveness to them? What would stand in the way of that?**

For part “a,” we’re trying to show that refusing to forgive doesn’t really affect the person who wronged you—it only affects you. When we refuse to forgive someone, we often feel terrible and the person/actions consume our thoughts, but the other person often doesn’t notice or suffer any negative effects from our lack of forgiveness.

For part “b,” we’re looking for “strategies” to help us get to a place of forgiveness towards someone. Share what has worked for you, as that can help others. For part “c,” you’ll want to be sensitive to people’s comfortableness to share. Some of these situations can be very personal, and so you don’t want to probe people beyond what they want to share. It may be good for you, the leader, to start by personally answering this question as an example and to break down some barriers and allow people to feel free to admit their struggles with unforgiveness.

Spend about 10-12 minutes on this question in its entirety.

5. **Jesus makes it clear that part of the reason we forgive others is because we have been forgiven ourselves. What could you do daily to remind yourself of how much Jesus has forgiven you? How do you think that would help you in Question #4, part “c”?**

Reciting the Lord’s Prayer every day – and praying according to it – is one thing that can help us remember how much God has forgiven us. Regularly reading Scripture and seeing Jesus’ consistent example of forgiveness can also be helpful in reminding us of the importance of forgiveness.

Spend 5-7 minutes on this question.