

2014-10-12 Life Group – Student Notes
The Anatomy of Forgiveness

STUDY & DISCUSSION 30-45 minutes

The Biblical teaching is pretty straight forward. Mercy Wins! Be like God. Forgiveness is not optional. Therefore, tonight is very heavy on application of the principles. These questions are you to review ahead of the meeting, but it may not be helpful to the leader if you have them out during the meeting.

Open: What are your favorite articles or kinds of clothing to wear? Least favorite? Why?

Read: Read Colossians 3:12-14.

Interpret: In this passage we are called to put on the clothing of a Christian. Why do you think Paul used this metaphor to describe our participation in these attributes?

Interpret: The passage begins with “Therefore.” What is the foundation/source/reason for us choosing these attributes?

Apply: We tend to think of forgiveness as something we have to do and often begrudgingly. But the Bible presents forgiveness as a positive, powerful, life-changing action that advances the gospel. What would change if we saw forgiveness as an opportunity rather than an obligation? Is it really possible to be that “positive” about forgiving people?

Apply: Pastor Scott said that people often mistake forgiveness for one of the following:

- Amnesia – forgetting the offense
- Acquittal – declaring the person blameless
- Approval of wrongdoing
- An Award to be earned.

What goes wrong if we consider any of these an element of forgiveness?

Apply: Sometimes when people say “I’m sorry,” we respond “That’s OK” or “Don’t worry about it.” What is the danger in using these words? What do you think we really mean?

Apply: Pastor Scott said that forgiveness is a promise NOT to do the following:

- *I Won't Seek Revenge*
- *I Won't Remind You*
- *I Won't Report it To Others*
- *I Won't Review It Myself*

Which of these four do you notice people violating the most?

Which of these four promises is hardest for you to keep? Why?

Apply: Do you think someone has to ask for forgiveness before you can forgive them? Explain.

Apply: What is the difference between being unforgiving and setting boundaries for people who continue to hurt you or sin against you?

Read: Read Matthew 6:12-15. Here we find the principle of reciprocity again. So what really happens if we don't forgive others? If God does not forgive us does that mean we lose our salvation, weren't saved in the first place or something else?

Apply: How would you describe the difference between forgiveness and forbearance? What is the danger in confusing the two?