

Better Together

*EXPLORING REAL WAYS
TO LIVE IN AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY*

STUDY GUIDE





FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER // *Colossians 3:13*

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The Greek word for “forgive” literally means “to give graciously, give freely.” Biblical forgiveness cannot be understood outside of God’s grace and love. In fact, God invites our participation in God’s grace through forgiveness. The following verses and thoughts need to be kept in mind as we consider Scripture’s teaching about forgiveness:

1. Do not confuse forbearing with forgiveness. We forbear idiosyncrasies and common weakness, but we forgive sin. We do not forbear sin, we confess and forgive sin (Colossians 3:13).
2. Forgiveness is a gift. It is an unconditional response of the heart. It is a gift we choose to give. Forgiveness reveals more about our relationship to God than our relationship to the sinner.
3. Forgiveness is a way of life (Leviticus 5:13; Colossians 2:13). Granting forgiveness to another frees you from bitterness and the need for revenge, releasing the one who has sinned to God (and the church) to work out consequences and justice. Forgiveness states, “I will no longer hold this against you.”
4. Forgiveness does not mean that sin is forgotten, nor that the sinner is trusted, nor that there are no consequences to the sin.
5. Refusing forgiveness is an affront to the cross. God’s forgiveness is limited to those who forgive others (Matthew 6:12,15; Matthew 8:35; Mark 11:25; Ephesians 4:32).

How shall we forgive?

1. Forgive in love (Luke 7:36-48; I Peter 4:8; I John 4:19)
2. Forgive in contrast to casting stones (John 8:1-11)
3. Forgive in view of our own spiritual debt (Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 17:3-10)

PRAY:

Ask God to reveal something meaningful through this time of reflection.

READ:

Offer your full care and attention to reading the provided scripture passages.

DISCOVER:

Matthew 18:23-35 “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Matthew 6:12, 15 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors...but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

DISCOVER, CONTINUED:

- 1) When Peter asks Jesus how often he should forgive, Jesus replies, “seventy times seven.” What is Jesus saying about forgiveness? About our willingness to forgive? (Matthew 18:21-22)
- 2) The servant in the parable that follows (Matthew 18:23-35) owed his master literally “millions” of dollars (a sum he could never repay) compared to the few dollars the fellow servant owed him. What is Jesus saying about the perspective we should have about forgiveness?
- 3) What does it mean to “forgive your brother or sister from the heart?”
- 4) Colossians 3:13 tells us we are to “forgive as the Lord forgave you.” Describe the Lord’s forgiveness for you.
- 5) Based on how God forgave us, what should our forgiveness look like toward others?
- 6) What is it about me/us that keeps us from forgiving as Jesus forgave?
- 7) What makes it possible to forgive? What is the cost of forgiveness? What is the fruit of unforgiveness? Now, answer those same questions where it concerns not forgiving.
- 8) What steps will I/we take to address sins that require forgiveness right now?

