

WOUNDED

Forgiveness needs more than a



Wounded: Part 6

Small Group Material

Leader Guide

The Only Way

April 10th, 2016

Bottom Line: *At its essence, forgiveness is "you don't owe me."*

Study Verses: *Isaiah 53:11, Romans 13:8-10, Romans 5:8, Romans 12:10*

Define The Win: *Participants would understand the importance of dealing with their pain and wrestling with forgiveness. They would recognize that if they are believers they live in a state of forgiveness and being in this place should influence their relationships and willingness to extend forgiveness to others.*

Key Points

- Forgiveness provides the only safe place for imperfect people to authentically connect.
- We are often trying to force God's promise instead of simply trusting it.
- We spend so much energy and time elevating small grievances while ignore the real pain that needs to be addressed.
- We create systems to make life work and run efficiently.
- Just because our lives work doesn't mean we are connected.
- Forgiveness is the state we live in. We can invite others to join us in this place, but we can't force them to enter.
- When you mask over the hurt, you mask over the forgiveness.
- Death is love demonstrated.
- Love enters into the life of another person to bring value and communicate worth.
- Don't minimize the pain....feel it. Rumble with forgiveness.
- You get a say in how the story ends.

ENCOUNTER

- Last week's homework was to address the underlying motivators for your behavior and not the actions themselves (Example: Blowing up in anger (ACTION) vs. a feeling of entitlement (MOTIVATOR)). What did you unearth from this endeavor?

Forgiving creates a new possibility of fairness by releasing us from the unfair past. A moment of unfair wrong has been done; it is in the inevitable past. If we choose, we can stick with that past. And we can multiply its wrongness. If we do not forgive, our only recourse is revenge. But revenge glues us to the past. And it dooms us to repeat it. -Lewis Smedes

- Read the quote for Lewis Smedes. How have you seen this quote play out in your life or the life of others?
- How does unforgiveness multiply the wrongs while keeping us stuck in the past?

FORMATION

- Read Isaiah 53:11. How does forgiveness bring healing into our lives? How does this passage speak to the process of forgiveness? What must occur before forgiveness is satisfied?
- Read Romans 13:8-10 and Romans 12:10. How does loving others fulfill the law? In what ways does living in a state of forgiveness influence our relationships?
- Read Romans 5:8. Death is love demonstrated. How did Christ's loving actions bring value to us and communicate our worth? Why does love always go first?

EXPRESSION

"It's seductive to think that not talking about our pain is the safest way to keep it from defining us, but ultimately avoidance takes over our lives. The idea that we're only as sick as our secrets" is more than an adage..." -Brene Brown

- Read the quote from Brene Brown. How do you react to pain: to lash out (anger, impatience, vindication, etc.) or to internalize it (grin and bear it, be overtly nice, pretend everything is okay, etc.)? Why do you react in this way? What would it look like to address the pain you feel and rumble with forgiveness?

- What are some areas where you find your life works, but you aren't connected with others? What do you believe is causing this disconnect?
- You get a say in how the story ends. Having been impacted by Christ's love, how are you rewriting the story of your wounds?

LEADER INSIGHT: Look all around you. The world is made up of systems. In an effort to make life run smoothly, make order from chaos and make efficiency manageable, people have created a networks of systems. They may help to run a business but they are not designed to foster connection. We've developed systems of behavior to serve as a framework for how we interact with others. What is acceptable, the consequences of not following the rules and how we navigate the relationship going forward are key elements of these systems.

It's not that systems in and of themselves are bad. We are just looking for them to fulfill something they are incapable of doing. In a marriage where "You cook...I clean," the kitchen might be immaculate and our bellies well fed, but it doesn't guarantee that the relationship will be fulfilling.

Just because our lives work, doesn't mean we're connected. Because things might be running smoothly or there haven't been any disagreements, systems provide a mirage making it look like true connection. Yet, eventually the illusion wears off and we are left trying to figure out ways to mend the relationship.

Connection requires a relationship. Relationships need love. And for love to be felt we must make room for forgiveness. It is forgiveness that provides the only safe place for imperfect people to connect. Unlike our man-made systems, forgiveness is messy, difficult and requires work. It also requires something to die.

Death is love demonstrated. God's ultimate act of love was an act of giving himself away. Jesus came to do for us what we couldn't do on our own. He entered into this world to bring us value and communicate our worth while reconciling us to God.

When we accept this grace, we take up a new residence. We reside in a state of forgiveness. We don't have to work the system to arrive at the destination of forgiveness. We can invite others to join us in this place but we can't force them to enter.

For many of us, the battle we face is extending that invitation of forgiveness. Instead we cover up the pain that we feel or attempt to lash out hoping for

vengeance and vindication. When we mask over the hurt, we mask over the forgiveness. Not acknowledging the pain doesn't make it magically go away. We shouldn't minimize the hurt. We need to feel it. If we don't, we remain glued to the past. We hurt ourselves all over again forgetting the state of forgiveness in which we reside.

The choice is ours. We must choose whether we want to hold onto the past or move into a new future anchored in the forgiveness we've experienced. We get a say in how the story ends. At its essence forgiveness is "You don't owe me."