

Personal Study Continued...

3. Choosing to stay in a state of unforgiveness often steals our joy and leads to bitterness. In what ways have you found this to be true?

4. This parable ends with a sobering verse: "So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart." In what ways can remembering our own need for forgiveness enable us to forgive those who hurt us?

READ

Read Matthew 6:5-14 and consider the questions below:

CONSIDER

1. Did you notice verse 14? What does this verse mean for you? How have you responded to people who have hurt you? How would you like to respond to them in the future?

2. Some offenses are easier to forgive than others. What transgressions are difficult for you to excuse?

3. Make a list of people who continually hurt you. Then pray for them. If your pain is keeping you from praying for them, ask God to heal your wounds and give you a heart like his.

PRAY

If there's anyone you need to forgive or from whom you need to seek forgiveness, do that first and foremost. Then ask for God to forgive you. Pray that Christ would fill you and give you the ability to forgive others as he forgives you. Pray for patience and understanding with difficult people.

Group Study

ICE BREAKER

Discuss this question as a group:

Who is your favorite movie villain? (i.e. Darth Vader, The Wicked Witch, Ivan Drago)

Previously we learned these key truths:

1. When we work, we work. But when we pray, God works.
2. If we pray we succeed. If we do everything but pray, we fail.

Discuss the questions below with your group:

- What new insights or questions about happiness came to your mind over the last week?
- In what ways did you attempt to bring happiness to the people in your life? How did they respond? What worked? What did not?

READ

Read Matthew 5:38-48 and discuss the questions below:

DISCUSS

1. Who are the people in your life who bring the “ugly” out of you and test your patience?
2. “Eye for an eye” retribution sounds sweet when we have been wronged, but it perpetually leads to more heartache. In what ways have you seen vengeance backfire?
3. Our ability to love, tolerate, and forgive our adversaries is a sign that the spirit of Christ is within us. How has Christ changed your attitude toward difficult people and situations?

READ

Read Luke 17:1-4 and discuss the questions below:

DISCUSS

1. If we are called to continuously forgive, how do we keep from being a doormat? How can we be sure that people won't take advantage? Is it possible to be forgiving and still set healthy boundaries?
2. Jesus shows us another facet of forgiveness in this passage: rebuke. As we've learned in the past weeks, we're called to admonish one another when we're out of line. How have you seen rebuke and forgiveness go hand-in-hand?
3. Verses 3 and 4 give us another look at unending forgiveness in Christ. Do you feel that you're a forgiving person? What would help you grow in this area of your spiritual life?

PRAY

Pray that God would continually remind you just how much forgiveness he gave on the cross. Ask that he fill you with the ability to pardon people's transgressions as he has pardoned yours. Pray for patience, gentleness, and mercy. Pray that your group would continue to sharpen each other's walk, and that you would be known as people of grace and love.