

WEEK 5: FORGIVENESS

FACILITATOR'S NOTE:

- ✓ Start your group discussion with the "Check-in" question to help your members reflect back on their week and follow up on last week's application challenge.
- ✓ Review the "Big Idea" to help you gain clarity around the heart of this week's message and focus your group's discussion towards a clear direction.
- ✓ Reflect on this week's scripture passages and guide your group through the "Discuss" questions to initiate meaningful dialogue around key concepts or insights from this week's message.
- ✓ Move your group discussion to a deeper level by leading them through questions in "Apply". Use discernment to customize these application questions to meet the needs & dynamics of your group.
NOTE: You do not have to cover all the questions provided in "Discuss" and "Apply".
- ✓ Connect with God together as a group through this week's "prayer practice", which can be in the form of a prayer exercise or some guidance on what to pray for in relation to the message or application.

CHECK-IN	Reflecting on last week, have you begun to take ownership of your life, in both the good and the bad? Did you experience victory in moving on from playing the "blame game"?
BIG IDEA	<p>"To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover the prisoner was you." In a broken world, over the course of our lives, we incur relational debts. There are the wrongs we do to God, but also the wrongs we do to others, and that are done to us. God did not intend for us to carry these baggages forever. Only Jesus is able to cancel the debts we owe, and to help us extend the same forgiveness to others. We must go through the door of forgiveness to receive the gift of freedom.</p> <p>Pastor Karen outlined the steps we take in moving from being forgiven, to being a forgiver:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. I must acknowledge my sin: Acknowledge the debt.2. Receive a fresh touch of forgiveness: Release from guilt and shame.3. I must irrationally extend that forgiveness to others: Release myself from the need for revenge.
DISCUSS	<p>Read Matthew 18:21- 33 (the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) What is Jesus saying in this parable? b) Do you identify with the master or servant in any way?

	<p>2. a) Define forgiveness. What does it mean to receive forgiveness from God, others, and yourself? b) How is forgiveness different from excusing what people have done? c) Which is more difficult for you: receiving forgiveness from God, from others, or from yourself? Are all three equally difficult?</p> <p>3. "Brothers, we are debtors." (Romans 8:12). As broken humans we are all debtors to God's justice that we alone are not able to pay. But as Christians we know it is paid for us by Christ. "It is finished!" Now we are debtors to his grace and mercy!</p> <p>Do these truths help you to accept forgiveness, and extend forgiveness?</p>
APPLY	<p>1. Are there debts you feel you owe, or debts you are holding against another? <i>Acknowledge them by writing them down, as you surrender them to Jesus.</i></p> <p>2. Is there someone specific you need to forgive, or ask forgiveness from? <i>Acknowledge them by writing them down, as you surrender them to Jesus.</i></p> <p>3. Reflect on and declare Romans 8:1-4. Does it make you more thankful for Jesus today? <i>Acknowledge your praise by writing it down, offering it to Jesus!</i></p>
PRAYER PRACTICE	<p>Break off into groups and share some of those things you wrote. Pray over Psalm 32 - a psalm of repentance but also of victory and restoration.</p>