



## Forgiveness – Week 2

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

#### Overview

In our second message of *Welcome Home for Christmas*, we'll unwrap the gift of **forgiveness** because there's nothing like this season to bring up some challenges between family members and others.

#### Discussion Questions

Forgiveness is the foundational tenet of the Christian faith, a pillar of the Gospel, and the essence of both Christmas and the cross. **Ephesians 4:32** says, **"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."** We need to forgive others in the same manner God forgave us—through the love and sacrifice of His Son, Jesus.

- If we withhold forgiveness from others, what does that say about the value we place on the forgiveness we've received through Jesus' love and sacrifice?

The New Testament word for forgiveness is *charizomai*. The root of this word is the Greek word for "grace-given." Extending grace is the seedbed and foundation of forgiveness. To be gracious, kind and benevolent is to pardon others and grant forgiveness.

- What role does grace play in forgiveness? Why is grace necessary?

#### Three Aspects of Biblical Forgiveness

1. **God's forgiveness for the world.**

**Matthew 1:21** says, **"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins."** The angel not only named Jesus but also declared the mission of Jesus. Jesus is the Greek form of a Hebrew name translated as *Jeshua* or *Joshua* which means "Jehovah is our Salvation." His name is His mission.

- How is our mission defined by our faith in Jesus our Savior? What mission did Jesus give us?

## 2. **God's gift of forgiveness for you personally.**

**Romans 3:23** says, **"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."** We've all missed the mark and can never measure up to the righteousness of God by our own strength and merits. All sin is relational because we've either committed sin against God or others, but our offenses are cleansed by His blood through our confession.

- Confession restores relationships. Identify any sin you may need to confess to God or others. Freedom comes in the confessing.

## 3. **Our gift of forgiveness for others.**

**Colossians 3:13** says, **"bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do."** The gift of forgiveness was not just so *you* can experience freedom. Grace and forgiveness is to be extended to others.

- Author Ken Sande says, "Unforgiveness is the poison one drinks in the hope that another dies." What are your thoughts about this statement?

## Life Challenge

Review the table below. Which truths challenged your past beliefs about forgiveness? What changes are you willing to make as it concerns forgiveness?

<b>Forgiveness is...</b>	<b>Forgiveness is not...</b>
A choice; an act of one's will	A feeling
Based on God's forgiveness of us	Based on what is "fair"
Supernatural	Natural
Commanded in the Bible as a lifestyle	A suggestion or occasional lifestyle
Possible with only one party	Reconciliation—which needs both parties

## Prayer

Father, thank You for the gift of forgiveness—not only for the forgiveness of our sins but for Your example of how to forgive others. This Christmas, as we celebrate the birth of Your Son, we choose to rid our lives of unforgiveness and extend love and grace to others. *Amen.* Pray for the specific needs for the group.