

Facilitator:

1. Open with Prayer
2. Welcome any newcomers
3. Give a 5-minute review of Peppy's sermon

Facilitator:

Please don't feel you have to cover every question. They become increasingly deeper and more thoughtful toward the end. It may help to highlight questions you want to be sure to cover, depending on the dynamics of your group and the time available. Try to keep your discussion to an hour and a half at the most.

CONNECT Group study questions for April 10 - Matthew 18:21-35

Title: The Principles of Forgiveness

Read **Matthew 18:21-35**— *Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.*

“Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also

my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

Question: We discussed last week the Cost of Forgiveness. Our first principle of forgiveness in this week’s lesson is “forgiveness extended to the offender is free, but it costs the one doing the forgiving a great deal.” Share with the group an example of a time you found forgiving someone to be costly. Does the cost of forgiveness make forgiving more difficult?

Question: For some reason the free gift of salvation is one act of forgiveness most people would rather pay for. Why is that? **Facilitator:** Some say, “I’m not so bad, so my debt isn’t that great, and I’m better than most people.” Others may say, “My debt is too big for God to forgive.”

Question: Have you ever given or been given incomplete forgiveness? What was it like? How was the forgiveness “incomplete?” How does incomplete forgiveness contrast with God’s forgiveness of sin?

Question: We are appalled at the action of the forgiven servant being unforgiving. In what ways do we act the same way? Why do we do that? **Facilitator:** Suggest that when we refuse or even hesitate to forgive, we are counting the cost of forgiveness to us personally when the cost of forgiveness already has been borne by Jesus Christ.

Question: If we fail to forgive others after being forgiven by our heavenly Father, we could end up in a debtors’ prison of our own making. Describe this prison, from experience if possible. How can we be freed from the prison of unforgiveness?