



## **Sunday Teaching Discussion Guide: Unconditional? Week 1: March 10, 2019**

### Recap:

- As Christians, we're called to forgive. To show grace and mercy to those around us. To recognize that we fall short ourselves and extend forgiveness to others that we hope will be extended towards us.
- We know that forgiving someone can be hard. If the same person wrongs you again and again, forgiveness is probably going to get harder each time. The baggage of prior offenses piles up. It gets easier to withhold forgiveness as we let the pain multiply.
- In the Gospel of Matthew, Peter asks Jesus how many times he should forgive someone who sins against him. Jesus astounds him by saying 77 times, or in some translations, 70 times 7 (490 times).
- In the Kingdom of Heaven, when forgiveness is extended to us, we should extend it to others.
- Forgiveness is a gift that frees us from a world of suffering. It is what a life following Jesus looks like. It is a gift to others that God has given to us.

### Discuss:

1. What do you think "true forgiveness" means? Why is forgiving so hard?
2. READ John 20:19-23
3. When Jesus' disciples receive the Spirit, they are then told they can choose to forgive or not to forgive sins. Do you see a correlation between the disciples receiving the Spirit and this responsibility? Why do you think Jesus puts the responsibility of forgiveness on us?
4. READ Luke 11:4
5. In some translations, the verse reads "everyone who is indebted to us." Do you think there is a difference between "sins against us" and "indebted to us"?
6. The word "for" in the verse implies a reason is given for the previous statement, which suggests that because we forgive others, God will forgive us. How do you understand the process of forgiveness?
7. READ Matthew 18:21-30
8. When the king pities the servant, he doesn't just give him more time to pay him back; he forgives his debt completely. Why do you think the king goes above and beyond what the servant asks for?
9. What do you think is going on in the servant's mind when he refuses the appeals of the fellow servant when asking for patience in paying him back?
10. Some might criticize Jesus' 77 times of forgiveness or 70 times 7 as enabling or allowing others to continually harm us. How would you respond to that?

Pray: Invite members of your group to share prayer requests. Give a short prayer thanking God for your group discussion and asking God to be with the requests that have been shared.

### Read at Home: Additional Readings about Forgiveness

- Genesis 50:15-21
- Psalm 103
- 1 John 1:5-10