

D.I.Y.: FORGIVENESS IS UP TO YOU

GOD VIEW:

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FORGIVENESS AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

FORGIVENESS IS DECIDING THAT SOMEONE WHO HAS WRONGED YOU DOESN'T HAVE TO PAY.

WEEK 1

We start the month with one of Jesus' parables recorded in **Matthew 18:21-35**. Jesus told this parable because Peter asked a question about forgiveness. Peter might have thought he was doing pretty well to say he'd forgive someone seven times, but Jesus raises the stakes and says we ought to forgive others even more. Jesus shows what this means with a parable about a servant who is shown incredible forgiveness yet doesn't do the same in return.

Bottom Line: **Forgive others because God forgives you.** God's love for us is huge. That love drives God to forgive us when we do something wrong. God can help us to forgive people in our life. When we realize how much God has forgiven us, we can turn around and forgive people who might hurt us. This might be difficult, but God can give us the help we need to love others and show forgiveness.

WEEK 2

In week two, we find Jesus interacting with an unexpected person in **Luke 19:1-10**: Zacchaeus. He was a tax collector working for Rome. He earned a reputation for taking advantage of his fellow Jews. Zacchaeus was considered an outcast by many. He must have been shocked when Jesus asked to come over for a meal. But when Zacchaeus encountered Jesus, he changed. He went back to those people, asked forgiveness, and returned four times as much

money as he took from them.

Bottom Line: **When you forgive others, it can change them.** When God forgives us, it changes us from the inside out. The same can be true when you forgive others. You never know what can happen when you take the first step towards forgiveness. When you decide to reach out and offer forgiveness, it can change the way they see you, the situation, and the impact of their actions.

WEEK 3

Jesus brought His followers to a mountain to explain to them what it means to live as part of God's kingdom. During that message, He said something important about forgiveness. In **Matthew 5:23-24** Jesus said, "Suppose you are offering your gift at the altar. And you remember that your brother or sister has something against you. Leave your gift in front of the altar. First go and make peace with them. Then come back and offer your gift." We should seek to make things right with others before trying to worship God.

Bottom Line: **Take the first step to forgive others.** Forgiveness is important to God. If we are in a difficult situation with someone, we should seek to make it right with them. While there are some relationships that might never be fully restored, we can at least try to offer and show forgiveness to others in our life.

WEEK 4

In **Luke 15:11-24**, Jesus shares a parable to help people understand God's amazing grace and forgiveness. A son came to his father and asked for his share of the inheritance. This broke the father's heart, but he went ahead and gave the son what he wanted. The son wasted every last penny and hit rock

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bottom. He decided to go home to his father and ask forgiveness. The father was waiting with arms open wide and ready to have his son home.

Bottom Line: **Everyone needs to be forgiven.**

Everyone at some point will do something to hurt another person, and we've all done something that goes against what God wants for us. We all need forgiveness. Thankfully, through Jesus, God offers forgiveness no matter what we've done.

WEEK 5

In **Luke 15:21-32**, we pick up the story of the Lost Son we start in week 4. His father and older brother each responded to the Prodigal Son differently. The Father welcomed him home with open arms and threw a giant party for him. The Older Brother chose not to forgive and become angry with his brother. He not only missed out on a party, but also missed out on rebuilding a relationship with his brother.

Bottom Line: **When you don't forgive, you miss out.**

When we choose not to forgive others, we could miss out on rebuilding a broken relationship. We might miss out on friendships or new, fun memories with our family, or peace in our own hearts. We could also miss out on the joy that God can give us when we choose to show forgiveness.