



EMBRACE

FELLOWSHIP | 09

FORGIVENESS

Session Objective:

To learn the importance of forgiving others in maintaining relationships.

C

CONNECT

Share to the group about the biggest unpaid amount someone borrowed from you, and how you feel about it now.

A

AFFIRM

THE WORD

Study the following passages and discover the reasons we have to forgive others.

1. "Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two maidservants. He put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.

"But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept." - Genesis 33:1-4

Forgiveness restores the _____.

The story of brothers Jacob and Esau is a popular story of sibling rivalry. Jacob coveted for himself the birthright of Esau through a deceptive scheme that make the story even worse because their mother was involved. As a result, he had to flee from the deadly rage that took over his brother.

After decades of being separated, it was a moving sight to see them embracing each other and weeping, and letting go from their hearts the sins and pains of the past.

Forgiveness is necessary for all relationships to survive and be restored as in the case of Jacob and Esau. If we will not give room for forgiveness, then any relationship, before it can ever begin is already doomed, because mistakes can happen in the future. Being the imperfect persons that we are, we cannot promise to ourselves and to others that we will not commit mistakes.

In the course of time, our relationships get tested by faults and shortcomings, and this is where the grace of forgiveness comes in. It allows the wounds and hurts to heal. It takes away the pain and gives the erring party a second, a third and maybe a seventy times seven chance to improve.

"One forgives to the degree that one loves." - La Rochefoucauld

2. *"But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." - Matthew 6:15*

It is a _____.
We must forgive because we are being forgiven in far greater degree by God. It is God's command that we forgive. It is not our prerogative whether to forgive or not. We are sinning if we do not forgive. Allow that forgiving may take time, that it does not come instantaneously, that it is a process, but we must forgive. Forgiving others ultimately is a spiritual issue between us and God.

3. *"When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, 'What if Joseph bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!' So they sent a message to Joseph, saying, 'Your father charged before he died, saying, 'Thus you shall say to Joseph, Please forgive, I beg you, the transgression of your brothers and their sin, for they did you wrong.' And now, please forgive the transgression of the servants of the God of your father. And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. Then his brothers also came and fell down before him and said, 'Behold, we are your servants.'*

But Joseph said to them, 'Do not be afraid, for am I in God's place? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring

about this present result, to preserve many people alive. So therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones. So he comforted them and spoke kindly to them." - Genesis 50:15-21

Forgiving helps regain your _____ by eliminating the _____ and by _____.

If the heart's cup is filled with hatred and rage, how can it contain the grace of God? How can a hand that is clenched hard in hatred and bitterness be able to receive God's love?

We forgive for our own sake - so that we can get back to life and liberate ourselves from bitterness and recover the joy and beauty of living. Hatred is like an acid that continuously corrodes our insides. It gnaws, and eats us from within.

"When I genuinely forgive, I set a prisoner free and then discover that the prisoner I set free was me." - Lewis Smedes

In the CARE group, members through the grace of God are taught to forgive those who have hurt them and done them even irreparable wrongs so that they can grow spiritually and live full and happy lives.

We do not even have to wait for the offending party to come and ask for forgiveness. In most instances, this does not happen. We have to realize that forgiving is never based on their repentance. It is rather based on the forgiving love of God that He bestows daily upon us. He forgives us, so therefore we can and must forgive.

Forgiveness then is not just an occasional act that we do whenever someone offends us, but an attitude towards life in general. It is the resolution to live at the sunnier side of life, and not to harbor any bitterness and malice for anyone.

THE LIFE

Share an experience when you became the recipient of someone's forgiveness. Include what you felt and experienced before you were forgiven and what happened after you were forgiven.

R**RESPOND**

Identify a person that you need to forgive. This person may not even be aware of your issue with him/her, and then plan a course of action to communicate acceptance, forgiveness and love to him/her.

Course of Action: _____

E**EXALT****THROUGH SONG**

Spirit Song

Oh let the Son of God enfold You
With His Spirit and His love
Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh let Him have those things that hold you
And His Spirit like a dove will descend
upon your life and make you whole

Refrain:

Jesus, oh Jesus, Come and fill Your lambs
Jesus, oh Jesus, Come and fill Your lambs

Oh come and sing this song with gladness
As your hearts are filled with joy derto is name
Lift your hands in sweet surrender to His name
Oh give Him all your tears of sadness
Give Him all your years of pain
And you'll enter into life in Jesus' name

THROUGH PRAYER

Thank God for always forgiving you of your sins. Ask Him to give you a forgiving heart, and to forgive you if in the past you have held on to your pains and bitterness. Ask Him to help you truly forgive not only others but yourself as well for the frustrations that you have with yourself.