



Sermon Discussion Guide – September 8, 2019
SERIES – SAY WHAT? – Does God Really Forgive Everything?
TITLE - “Forgiveness Is For Giving”
Psalm 103

SUMMARY – There seems to be so much hurt in our world it is hard to imagine what life would be like without it. What kind of world it would be if we were able to truly love God and love our neighbor as ourselves? It would be close to perfect, maybe even a glimpse of a heavenly life. But we don’t live in a perfect world, and we fall short of loving the way God loves us. So what do we do? We learn to practice forgiveness. We show forgiveness the way God has forgiven us. It is not an easy endeavor but practicing forgiveness helps us experience relationships and community the way they were designed.

DAILY STUDY & PRAYER

Read / Reflect / Respond

(*READ* the verse, take a moment to *REFLECT* on its meaning, *RESPOND* by writing down some thoughts and praying)

Monday – Psalm 103:8 *“The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.”*

Tuesday – Acts 7:60 *And falling to his knees he cried out with a loud voice, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.”*

Wednesday – Job 22:23 NLT *“If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored— so clean up your life.”*

Thursday – James 4:6 *Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”*

Friday – Colossians 3:13 *“bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.”*

Saturday – Psalm 103:11 *“For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love...”*

GROUP DISCUSSION

(*This is only a guide – select the points you want to discuss or supplement with your own materials*)

Open with Prayer

1. What is something you remember from the sermon that stood out to you or never heard before?
2. How does hurt become a vicious cycle of relational destruction? What does it take to break the cycle?
3. Talk through a difficulty scale for the following using a 1 to 10 scale: Releasing Blame; Restoring Relationship; Renewing Community. Which is the most difficult to accomplish and why?
4. How does understanding the “why” of someone’s actions and words sometimes help with being able to show compassion? Why does knowing a reason not equal an excuse for the behavior?

Close with prayer requests and prayer

NEXT STEPS (Optional for group discussion)

1. **TEMPERATURE GAUGE** – How am I doing when it comes to hurting others? How am I doing when it comes to forgiveness? How would I rate myself on a scale of 1-10?
2. **RESPOND** – How is the Lord calling me to respond? In confession and repentance? Prayer for help and guidance? Seeking out a confidant or listening ear? Take a moment to write down one action step.
3. **PRACTICE** – What is one person, circumstance, or incident that you want to start the forgiveness with? Start with praying for it and see what happens.



Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God's wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God's instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. ***Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group!***
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group during the next series. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives?
- ✓ **EVALUATE** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn't. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Review the discussion guide and sermon notes for this week. You can also view the sermon from our website, www.faithunitedepc.org. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group.
- Feel free to adapt the format as needed. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Next Steps section or add additional Scripture and resources. Remember this is only a guide and you don't have to complete all of it. It is a tool to promote good discussion. The goal is good discussion not necessarily getting through every question.
- The questions with Bible verses associated with them are there to encourage Bible literacy. So encourage different people to open their Bibles and read selected verses if they are willing and able.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.