

Why Should I Forgive?

Ephesians 4:30-32

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another...” - Eph. 4:31-32

Main Point: Christians are called to forgive

Introduction: Use the following questions to introduce the topic of discussion -

Can you think of a recent experience with road rage? Share your experience with the group. How does road rage demonstrate a lack of forgiveness?

To which group of people do you have the hardest time showing forgiveness - family, friends, co-workers, employees, church family, or another? Why do you think that is?

Jesus often taught on the importance of forgiveness. He called His followers to forgive others, because they know the forgiveness of God. This forgiveness isn't just for those closest to us, but should extend even to those we might consider our enemies. In this, we look to Jesus who showed us what it looked like to live a life of forgiveness even as He went to the cross. When we start to forgive like Jesus, we begin to show the world who He is.

Read Ephesians 4:30-32. A few reasons why we are called to forgive:

1) LACK OF FORGIVENESS ENSLAVES.

Following our own path is destructive. Jesus said in **John 12:35** “whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going.” How can unforgiveness enslave us to darkness? According to **Luke 4:18**, what has Jesus come to do?

Have you ever experienced darkness in your life due to a circumstance in which it was hard for you to forgive someone? Read **Galatians 5:1** and describe in your words what that “yoke” was like. What steps have you taken to live in freedom?

When we choose not to forgive others we become slaves to unforgiveness ourselves. **Romans 8:21** says “creation will be liberated from its bondage and decay and brought into freedom and glory of the children of God.” As children of God we are taught to pray in **Matthew 6:12**. What does this verse imply concerning our forgiveness of others?

2) FORGIVENESS REMOVES ANGER. Read Ephesians 4:31.

Read **Ephesians 4:26-27**. What does Paul say anger towards people allows Satan to do? What does that mean, and why is it significant? See what Paul says in **2 Corinthians 2:10-11** also.

Bitterness is a taste that can overpower any dish in cooking. Take your favorite pizza and all it takes to destroy it is a sprinkling of bitter olives! How does bitterness flavor our lives if we let it become a part? How is forgiveness the anti-olive?

Is there anyone who has planted a root of bitterness in your life? Maybe there is someone you are angry or bitter with now. Share your story with the group. What steps can you take this week to uproot that bitterness and offer them forgiveness?

3) **FORGIVENESS MAKES YOU MORE LIKE JESUS. Read Ephesians 4:32.**

Read **Luke 6:35-36**. What does Jesus say about being merciful? When have you forgiven someone, but left strings attached? What would it mean for us if that's the way Jesus loved and forgave us?

What are some signs that you have forgiven somebody who has done wrong toward you? Are you directing behavior toward anyone that might be contrary to that of Jesus' behavior?

Read **Luke 23:34**. What was the context of Jesus words? How is this the ultimate demonstration of forgiveness? If Jesus could forgive in this situation, what makes you think you can't forgive in yours?

Apply It:

Start cutting the roots of bitterness and anger you hold towards the people in your life. Do you believe Jesus is big enough and powerful enough to keep those roots from poisoning your life? Ask Jesus to heal the wounds of your past and present, and nourish your future with love and forgiveness, grace and mercy.

Pray:

God, thank you for forgiving each of us. When you sent Jesus to the cross on our behalf it was an example of how we should forgive others. Help us to lay aside all pride, anger, resentment, and bitter spirits toward those in our lives. May we focus on loving our enemies and praying for them. Amen.

Coming up at VillageChurch:

March 18th - The BIG Serve (Prayer walks, street clean up, Yard work for disabled, Music outreach)

April 1st - Easter Sunday (VillageKids Choir singing)

April 22nd - BIG Tent Revival

May 13th - Mother's Day: Baby Dedication, VillageKids Choir singing