

Committed

The Freedom of Forgiveness (Week 4)

LifeNotes

TALK IT OVER

Main Idea

Withholding forgiveness is a prison with only ourselves as inmates. Forgiveness is the key to our freedom.

Key Scriptures

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven times.'" Matthew 18:21-22

"This is how my Heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart." Matthew 18:35

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." Ephesians 4:32

Forgiveness is initially, and ultimately, an act of obedience to our God who freely offers His forgiveness to us.

Don't wait to forgive until you feel like forgiving; you will never get there. Feelings take time to heal after the choice to forgive is made. – Neil T. Anderson

Forgiveness is not:

- Forgiveness is not saying, "I'm okay with what you did."
- Forgiveness does not mean forgetting.
- Forgiveness is not extended because the offender asks for it.

Steps to forgiveness:

1. Identify it.
2. Confess it.
3. Choose freedom over a prison cell.
4. Believe what God says about it.

Start talking.

- What lessons does culture teach us about forgiveness?
- How does withholding forgiveness trap us?
- What are current examples in the news of withholding forgiveness?

Start thinking.

- Read Matthew 18:21-35. Why did the master initially forgive the servant?
- How did you feel when you read that the servant began to "choke" the man that bowed him the 100 denari?
- Why was the master so upset once he heard about the servant he had forgiven?
- How do you feel about the Master's response? Justified? Too harsh?
- Verse 35 is very strongly worded. Why did Jesus use such clear and seemingly harsh language? What is the "bottom line" Jesus wanted to convey regarding forgiveness?

Start doing.

- Read through the Steps to Forgiveness. Which leaps out to you most?
- How can you apply those steps this week?

Closing prayer.

Father, thank you for your consistent and overwhelming forgiveness! I confess I have been holding on to hurt. I've allowed it to hold me back from your best in my life. I confess I have not offered grace enough. Help me to trust in you alone to heal my heart and give me the courage to offer forgiveness.