

Discussion Questions

Have someone read the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant slowly while the group uses the gift of meditation to experience the teaching of Jesus.

Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

“At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

“But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

“His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

“But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

“This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.” Matthew 18:15-17, 23-35

1. This is a tough teaching. Jesus is way more gracious towards and less “in your face” about sexual sins than he is towards those who are unforgiving or who hold a grudge. Why is that? It seems the church does the opposite. We are way harder on those who commit sexual sins than we are on those who refuse to forgive someone(s).
2. Share a time when you forgave and reconciled with someone who really hurt you. What did the person do? How hurtful was it to you? How long did it take to forgive the person? Did you later discover you really did not forgive them and had to re-forgive them? How do you know you have forgiven the person? Is he/she/they back in your life...why or why not?

3. What factors make it easier to forgive and what factors or types of sins against a person make it harder, almost impossible to forgive?
4. What's the difference between forgiveness and trust? Is it true that if you have truly forgiven a person that means you have to let them back into your life, if you don't it shows you haven't really forgiven him/her/them?
5. What about holding a grudge against someone who did not hurt you but hurt someone close to you, is it okay or not okay?
6. If you forgive a person for a criminal offense, does that mean you should not or cannot seek justice through the church court or legal court system? Isn't part of forgiveness letting people "off the hook?"

7. Read this quote and react to it:

"Of the seven deadly sins, anger is the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations still to come, to savor the last tooth filled morsel of the pain you are giving back to them, in many ways is a feast fit for a King. The chief drawback is what you are wolfing down at the feast is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you." ~Frederick Buechner

8. Of the three steps to forgiveness which one is the most challenging for you? (If you forgot what they were... take pity/show compassion; cancel the debt; let them go)
9. Any further questions, insights, or highlights on the topic or the message?