

Freedom in Forgiveness

**Facts the Bible Tells Us about Marriage:**

**Icebreaker: Introduce yourself; share about a time you forgave or needed to be forgiven**

**Small groups of 4:** Read Philemon (or option to share to whole group as a devotion)

Q: What do you think could have happened between Philemon and Onesimus to have them part ways?

Q: What type of relationship did Paul have with Onesimus?

Q: What had to change in order for there to be forgiveness and as a result, reconciliation?

Q: How did this forgiveness and reconciliation change the lives of Paul, Onesimus and Philemon?

**BIG BOARD: Write answers down**

**STEPS ON HOW TO FORGIVE OTHERS**

SMALL GROUP: DISCUSSION 1: Write down each other’s answers

**1. REMEMBER:** When we become believers, we are new creations. Remembering this truth gives us the ability to forgive.

***Read Ephesians 4:22-24***

Q: Why is it hard to forgive someone?

Q: Who in your life was there or is there a struggle to forgive and why?

SMALL GROUP: PRAYER 1

Pray for each other; who you need to forgive and why or praise for those that you have forgiven and how this could help others.

SMALL GROUP: DISCUSSION 2: Write down each other’s answers

**2. RELATE:** We must now resolve to actually forgive because of Christ forgiving us. When we do this we allow the love of Christ to shine brightly through our spontaneous acts of forgiveness and our unwillingness to seek retribution.

***Read Ephesians 4:25-32***

Q: What has helped you forgive those who have hurt you?

Q: Why do people, in general want revenge?

You can withhold forgiveness because you don’t think the person deserves it, it’s not your place. Forgiveness serves as the only ointment that can heal most of our relationships. If we want to resolve, we have to forgive.

SMALL GROUP: PRAYER 2

Pray for each other acknowledging Christ power to help us to forgive. Pray, asking forgiveness for those you have wanted to seek revenge.

SMALL GROUP: DISCUSSION 3: Write down each other’s answers

**We talked about those we need to forgive; we talked about the value of forgiving, now let’s talk about the next step; reconciliation.**

**Four Kinds of Reconciliation**

1. To bring you closer to the person you’ve hurt/been hurt by
2. To forgive you, because you committed the sin
3. To forgive them, because they committed the sin
4. To rebuild the relationship

**3. RESTORE:** We must take the next step, like that which was required of Philemon and work towards rebuilding the relationship, whatever that may look like?

Q: What relationships have you had to rebuild? How difficult was it?

Q: When you have forgiven someone, what has been the result?

SMALL GROUP: PRAYER 3

Think, pray about someone that fits each of the 4 kinds of reconciliation. Then pray as a group, sharing each of their names and the next step on what needs to be done.

**Close:** What are you going to walk with?