

21 Days of Prayer – Forgive – Small Group Questions

1. Read or Recite Matthew 6:9-13 (the Lord's prayer)

Also read Matthew 6:14-15

2. Forgiveness is often difficult. Why do you think it is difficult?
3. You would think that holding a grudge would feel satisfying. But why does a lack of forgiveness end up being damaging?

(Mike said: "The trouble is, lack of forgiveness does more damage to us than to the offender. When we don't forgive, we grow hardened, sour, bitter, and vengeful. We want the person who wronged us to suffer. Those negative feelings war against the love and compassion we are to have.)

4. In the story about Joseph we read about how favoritism was shown in Joseph's house – Joseph was clearly "the most loved" out of all his brothers. Because of this, the brothers grew bitter towards him. To make things worse, Joseph didn't know how to hold his tongue and spoke of these dreams he was having in which he was clearly boss over his brothers. They really began to hate him. From there the story unfolds – he is sold into slavery, wrongly accused, sent to prison. Joseph could never have imagined that his brothers would go this far to get rid of him. He could never imagined how rough his circumstances would get. Yet Joseph did not give in to bitterness

Twenty-two years later (*think about staying soft-hearted for 22 years towards someone who did you wrong*) the brothers arrive in town needing something from Joseph and he ends up teaching us some key things about forgiveness. **Read the following points and discuss how easy or difficult each one is for you, what is your experience with these aspects of forgiveness.**

A. Give Up the Need for Revenge

- Read Psalm 10:14 – what do we learn from this verse?
- What would have happened if Joseph spent his time plotting revenge?
- What happens if we spend our time plotting revenge?

b. Don't Absolve the Guilty Party of Responsibility

- Read Genesis 45:4
- What happens if we try to pretend that nothing hurtful has happened to us when it has?
- Is it fair to acknowledge wrongdoing to the person you are also choosing to forgive?

c. We Must Forgive Because God Forgave Us

- Read the parable Jesus used to give us God's perspective about forgiveness, Matthew 18:21-35
- What does it mean to "freely forgive others"? (Read also Eph. 4:32)
- What does this mean and have you experienced this?
"When we choose with our will to obey God, He will give us the power to obey."

d. Believe God Will Use Your Pain to Accomplish His Purpose for Your Life

- Read Genesis 50:19
- Can you look back on your life and see how God used painful experiences to shape you?

5. **Have you witnessed this in your own life?**

"Holding onto offense is at the root of many people's bondages and struggles. When we don't forgive we choose to hold on to our pain. This creates a prison of pain in our lives that will continue to grow and fester. On the other hand, forgiveness will free us from the pain we are holding to..."

6. **Break off into smaller groups --** Ask for forgiveness personally and also pray for God's help to forgive someone right now.

¹²And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.