



The Rhythm of Forgiveness | Ronnie Johnson | 3.10.19
Life Group Weekly

START

To get things started, go around and answer the following question:

How do you tend to handle conflict? Do you tend to face it head on (fight) or try to avoid it (flight)?

SHARE

Welcome to week five of our relationship series called “Mixtape.” If you have ever made a mix tape for someone, chances are your motivation was to move them. Whether it was to remind them of your love, make them rethink things about your relationship, or even convince them to get back together; mixtapes are created to inspire movement!

In this series, we are talking about moving our relationships closer to what God originally intended them to be. Whether you are single, dating, engaged, or have been married for years, we all have meaningful relationships in our life. And if we are honest, these relationships always have room for improvement.

To finish things off, we are talking about what the Bible has to say about forgiveness.

Read Matthew 18:21-35

What is your initial reaction to this story?

Who do you resonant with most in this story? Why?

Conflict is inevitable. As beautiful as relationships are, we are not always going to see eye to eye with each other. The question is not if arguments are going to happen, the question is; how are we going to respond when they do?

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant is one of the more convicting stories Jesus ever told, especially when you understand the context. The story is about a man who owes the king 10,000 talents. A talent (or bag of gold depending on your translation) is twenty years worth of work. Which means this guy managed to get himself into so much debt that it would take him 200,000 years to pay it off.

Translation: There once was a man who owed more than he could ever pay!

And in a beautiful act of grace, the king forgives everything, completely canceling this man's absurd debt. Relieved, the man walks away, feeling like he just won the lottery. But when he runs into a man who owes him a significantly smaller debt (100 days of work), he refuses to pass on the love and throws the man in prison. Jesus is keying into a truth that is essential to understand in our relationships: If we have any chance of forgiving others, it will be because we realize how much God has forgiven us!

As Ronnie reminded us this weekend, "if you want to know what true forgiveness looks like, consider the cross." Everything starts with God's love for us. Those who understand that they have been forgiven much, will love much. However, those who think they have only been forgiven little, will love little.

Ronnie talked about the rhythm of forgiveness and learning to practice forgiveness on a daily basis. Consider your daily life, what are some of the little things that can irritate you? What does that reveal about the state of your heart? (i.e. traffic, criticism, insensitive

comments, dishes, records of wrongs etc.)

Why do you think Scripture talks about forgiveness in so many different places?

Who is one person you need to forgive this week? What is one practical step you can take toward forgiving them?

M O V E

Read Colossians 3:12-17

Which statement stood out to you the most in this passage? Why do you think that is?

In a perfect world, there would be no reason to forgive because no one would ever do anything wrong. But the world we live in is far from perfect, and relationships fall apart every day. As followers of Jesus, we can see these moments as opportunities. When someone wrongs us, talks bad about us, belittles us, lies to us, or tears us down, we have the opportunity to extend the same grace we have been given. As a church, if we can grasp what Paul is saying in these six verses in Colossians, it would change the world!

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone”
Colossians 3:13

Forgiveness and grace go hand and hand. They are like breathing. In order to exhale forgiveness to others, we must first inhale God’s grace.

Inhale: The message of the Gospel is that Jesus has paid a price for us that we could never pay back.

Exhale: We have opportunities every day to pass on that grace to the world.

Trying to extend forgiveness without focusing on God’s grace is like trying to exhale without taking a breath; it doesn’t work. This week, as you move toward letting go and forgiving, continue to remind yourself of the grace and forgiveness God has given to you!

Exercise: Breath Prayer

Pause for sixty seconds with your group to practice this by completing an exercise called "breath prayer." Sit in a comfortable place, close your eyes, picture one person in your mind you are struggling to forgive, and breathe. With every inhale you take, say to yourself "I am forgiven" with each exhale say "I forgive you"

Inhale: I am forgiven

Exhale: I forgive you

This exercise won't fix everything in sixty seconds, but the more you practice, forgiveness will become as natural as breathing. It will help remind you of the truth of God's word and the fact that we cannot give to others, what we have not received ourselves.

P R A Y

As a group, spend some time praying with and for each other. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to share more freely.

T O G O

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." - Ephesians 4:32

