

Forgiveness | Lauren Bohn | 8.29.21

Weekly Study

START

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

If you could live in one city for the rest of your life, which city would that be?

SHARE

Welcome back to Group! This week, guest speaker Lauren Bohn preached a powerful message on forgiveness. Forgiveness is more about us surrendering to God the things that can poison us. Allowing Him to do what only He can do and alleviate the burden off of us, propelling us into freedom carrying a lighter load. Before we dive into the sermon, take some time to check in with your Group by answering these questions.

What's one way God is speaking to you this season?

What is one thing you feel like God is teaching you right now?

What was the most challenging part of your week?

What was the highlight of your week?

GROW

Read Ephesians 4:29-32

How does this passage resonate with Lauren's message on Sunday?

What's the importance of Paul's words in this passage for Believers?

The process of forgiveness can be a two-way street, but it first and most importantly operates as a one-way street. A one-way street towards freedom, helping the victim carry a lighter load. Giving God the burdens we were never meant to carry and letting His word(s) define us over our situation. Forgiveness sets us free from something, only to set us free to something. It takes us from victim to victor, from justifying to justified, and from bitter to joy.

“Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, and slander, along with every form of malice” (verse 31). One of the commands Jesus gives Believers is to love and pray for our enemies. In fact, he furthers the command by telling us to bless our enemies. In the face of adversity and injustice in a fallen world, how do we love and pray for the people who consistently hurt us and others? By emptying ourselves at the cross and fixing our eyes to the One who ultimately forgave at all costs.

Jesus, the great modeler of forgiveness, bore the cross and a painful death to negate every sin we've ever committed against God. When we know and understand how great we've been forgiven by Him *only*, we can extend that same forgiveness to others. Though not easy, and certainly a process, it sets us free from carrying the burden of pursuing both justice and healing on our own terms. It allows God, the ultimate healer, to cleanse us of the very things that can poison our own soul and wellbeing. Forgiveness is for us first.

Is there someone in your life you need to forgive this week?

How does Lauren's message from Sunday, help you propel forward into that freedom of forgiveness?

M O V E

Read Romans 3:21-26

What life changing news has Paul shared with us and how does this change our hearts towards others?

How can forgiveness, as talked about in this passage, allow us to go from a victim to a victor in hard circumstances?

We were once separated from God by the very nature of our sin, until Jesus bridged that gap through his unjustified death on the cross. Forgiveness was freely given and offered to us on Calvary without our asking or permission. Because of God's great love, which was demonstrated on Good Friday, we are never too far gone. While we are undeserving of this grace, the story of Jesus reminds us the power in forgiving.

This is a story we have been told since Sunday school, but when we truly take it to heart, we hear the story again unscathed. Therefore, every time we watch another film depict the crucifixion of Jesus, it stirs something in our soul. There's something about seeing the underlying theme of unfailing love that leads to forgiveness played out live, that makes it so transformative. There is nothing better than knowing that even in our lowest moments, God has wiped the slate clean.

When we take this head knowledge and truly bring it to our hearts, we can fully understand the love God has for us. He doesn't look at us any different than He did before when we were still sinners. Knowing this, we are able to have compassion towards others in our lives. The same sin residing in you and me is the sin causing us pain when we've been wronged. There will be countless people all the way from enemies to our own friends that cause us heartache in our life, and it is easy to become resentful. On the other hand, knowing the grace of Christ allows us to forgive others the way Christ forgave us. It not only mends relationships, but it brings

personal freedom to our soul. Resentment and anger only bring suffocating feelings, but the love of Christ can bring life.

How did Lauren's message this weekend change your heart on forgiveness?

How do you think prayer can change your feelings towards the person you need to forgive?

P R A Y

We need prayer now more than ever. Spend some time-sharing prayer requests. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking off into two separate groups (or calls if you are an online group) to share more freely.

T O G O

- *"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."* Colossians 3:13