

THE
HOPE
YOU
NEED

2017

the year of

H·O·P·E

SUNDAYS
FEB 12 - APR 16
9 & 11 am



GROWING CLOSER TO GOD

Through Forgiveness

Message by Pastor Kevin Cavanaugh
Cedar Grove Church | March 26, 2017

LEADER'S STUDY GUIDE



WATCH FOR LEADER'S TIPS

Getting to Know One Another

- When you were growing up how was forgiveness dealt with in your family and with your siblings.
- What is one of your earliest recollections as a Christian of either being on the asking or receiving end of forgiveness.
- Which is most true of you in general? "I find it hard/easy to forgive." Explain!

GROWING CLOSER TO GOD THROUGH FORGIVENESS

▶ God forgives instantly!

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Matthew 6:14-15

- If you are struggling to forgive anyone you must surrender the struggle.

- You surrender the struggle by asking the **Holy Spirit** to give you the strength and power that you don't personally possess to forgive.

▶ God's forgiveness is full and **complete!**

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

- God does not **forgive** in parts, portions, or installments.
- We want to base it on merit and **change**.
- God isn't looking for evidences of your failure so he **can prove** you didn't mean it.
- He knows it will take time and will involve lots and lots of **failure**.
- This is what He calls **Grace!** We receive it and we **dispense** it to others...
- Each time you forgive you become a little more **like Him** and you grow **closer** to Him.

▶ God forgives **repeatedly!**

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
1 John 1:8-10

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Quick Questions

- I find it easy to forgive T/F
- I get hurt/offended easily T/F
- I let go of grievances quickly T/F
- I tend to feed and fuel my grievances by thinking about them over and over T/F
- I am struggling to forgive someone right now T/F

If we refuse to forgive we actually bring into question whether we believe in Jesus. To believe in Jesus, in a biblical way, is to follow what He says. Describe when you came to grips with Jesus Christ being the Lord over the forgiveness issues in your life? If you haven't as yet, will you right now? God wants us to learn to look to Him and trust Him

If you are struggling to forgive anyone you must surrender the struggle. You surrender the struggle by asking the Holy Spirit to give you the strength and power you don't personally possess to forgive. Stop and ask for this help right now.

Whose names are on the files in your brain that you need to trash and delete (wipe clean) right now? Name them....

Doing a Forgiveness Assessment

Stop and pray together to ask God to give you grace, humility, discernment and strength.

1. Do you know of anyone who presently has something against you?

Matthew 5:23 says, Therefore if you are taking your gift to the altar and there REMEMBER that a brother or sister has something against you. Leave your gift at the altar, first go and be RECONCILED and then come and offer your gift. One of you pray and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind any who have something against you.

Names may come instantaneously or they may come later. If they come it is very important you write them down and act.

2. Those who have hurt/sinned against me...

¹⁵ “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Matthew 18:15 (NIV)

- Have I gone to those who have hurt/sinned against me?

Be careful not to minimize or dismiss your feelings in order to avoid potential conflict or confrontation. How would you know? Is the relationship still broken? Would you try to avoid them if you saw them in a public place?