

WOMEN OF THE WAY (W.O.W.)

Meeting Date: 04/22/20

Facilitator: Jade Butler

Lesson Plan: Forgiveness Study

A. **SUMMARY** - Forgiveness can be an emotionally charged word. We have all been hurt by someone, but sometimes it brings years of pain and bitterness. Fortunately, God knew that amidst pain and suffering, there is hope in forgiveness. Undoubtedly, walking through forgiveness can be quite difficult and overwhelming. Today with this lesson, I hope I can help each and every one of you to take the next step in forgiveness and or even healing old wounds.

B. SCRIPTURE INSIGHTS

1) Do we have to forgive when others are ready to apologize? (Col 3:13)

- a. Forgiveness is a choice that we make through our free will. We do not have to wait for us to be “ready” or for our feelings to lead us. We must decide to forgive; the emotions will follow in time.
- b. We are not to forgive only when we are ready (or when the person has apologized), but rather we are instructed to forgive because God has already freely forgiven us through Jesus Christ.

2) How do we forgive when we don't feel like it?

- a. We forgive by faith out of an obedience to God's commands. Since forgiveness goes against our human, self-centered nature, we must forgive out of faith in God. We must trust that God will change our hearts in time, while we forgive in obedience. **(Luke 17:3-4)** Time will not heal the wounds; only forgiveness will.
- b. A lot have been hurt, by family, friends, maybe even by God where you've been angry with him. Forgiveness isn't for the other person. It is for you, your state of mind, and you're healing. God has forgiven us so many times, in times where we shouldn't have been forgiven but he has **(Hebrews 8:12)**. Through his grace and everlasting love, we should have forgiven as he has forgiven us.

- c. Will it be easy? No, but it will help you to move forward and not have so much resentment in your heart.

3) **Pride and Stubbornness**

- a. Unresolved anger keeps us from moving forward because it locks us in a time machine, frozen on the exact moment when a particular offense occurred. Fear of further injury makes us unwilling to move to new levels of relationship, not only with those who have hurt us but with anyone who represents a similar threat. Who are we to feel like we shouldn't forgive? God has forgiven us repeatedly and even sent forth his own son to die for our sins. **(Ephesians 4:31-32)**
- b. I'm sure most of us have felt empty and hurt. Hurt to the point where forgiving the person who hurt you or abused you was out of the question, but God is there. In **Micah 7:18-19** it tells us "Who is a God like You, pardoning iniquity And passing over the transgression of the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His anger forever, Because He delights *in* mercy.[j]He will again have compassion on us, And will subdue our iniquities." He is a God of mercy who has forgiven us when we shouldn't be forgiven. Let us not be merciful but aim towards being better at forgiving and healing our old wounds.

Additional reading(s): James 1:19-20, Philippians 4:6-7, Titus 2:11-15

D. PERSONAL REFLECTIONS - Jade

E. FOR GROUP DISCUSSION -

- a. How do you know when the process of forgiveness is complete?
- b. Reflection: Has there been a person in the past who hurt you badly and you have not forgiven him/her?
- c. Can you forgive yourself for something you've done to others?
- d. How will you move forward once you've forgiven the one who hurt you?

F. **Head to Heart Message - (Matthew 6:14-15) -**

God forgives, when he shouldn't, because none of us are perfect, as **Romans 3: 23** says. Why should you change your heart and forgive? And how do you not resent and hate those who hurt you? What steps will you take from today to change how you will react to past or present situations going forward?

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