



STUDY GUIDE September 17, 2023

Message Series: Side By Side
Message Title: Should I Forgive?
Teaching Pastor: Brian Hughes

Warm-up/Icebreaker: (10 min.)

If they were to make a documentary about your life, what would be your favorite scene and why?

Pray:

Heavenly Father, we are so grateful that You are always only a prayer away. We praise You for Your love, Your goodness and Your faithfulness to us. You are a Father who is aware of the needs of Your children, even before we ask. You know every circumstance and have already gone ahead to provide everything we need. Open our hearts and minds to the truth that You want to teach us and give us a spirit willing to obey You no matter what. We ask that You strengthen our faith as we continue on the path You have laid out in front of us. We pray all of this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Get Started: (10 min.)

- When someone hurts or offends you, describe your typical response? How does your response change when it's someone close to you?

"Forgiveness is at the heart of God because where there is no forgiveness, there is no community, no church, no family, no real living side by side. Forgiveness is the medicine that heals and it's the glue that keeps us together and healthy through our failures." - Pastor Brian Hughes

- Have you experienced a time where forgiveness has been the medicine that heals or the glue that bonds? Share briefly.

Read Proverbs 17:9 and Proverbs 10:12.

"For us to live well, side by side, forgiveness has to be deployed...regularly. Not casually, of course. Forgiveness isn't the shrugging of our shoulders in the presence of our pain, as if what you did to me doesn't matter. It does. But I love how Mark Twain said it, "Forgiveness is the fragrance that the violet sheds on the heel that has crushed it." - Pastor Brian Hughes

- How would you describe the quote by Mark Twain, to someone who you are teaching about forgiveness.

"At the end of the day, forgiveness has a double benefit: it resets the relationship, and it frees the one who got hurt." - Pastor Brian Hughes

- Have you experienced a time where forgiveness has reset a relationship? Share briefly.
- Have you experienced a time where forgiving someone who hurt you actually set you free? Share briefly.

Read Mark 11:25, Matthew 6:14, and Ephesians 4:32.

- Based on these verses, what is the main reason we are commanded to forgive others?

Watch and Discuss Video (running time 12 minutes, 15-minute discussion)

- How does hearing that forgiveness is both a decision and a process help you?
- Which of the following quotes inspires you the most and why?

Mother Teresa: *"If you really want to love, you must learn how to forgive."*

TD Jakes: *"I think the first step is to understand that forgiveness does not exonerate the perpetrator, but forgiveness liberates the victim. It's a gift you give yourself."*

Mahatma Gandhi: *"The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is an attribute of the strong."*

Martin Luther King Jr.: *"We must develop and maintain the capacity to forgive. He who is devoid of the power to forgive is devoid of the power to love."*

Read Matthew 18:21-35.

- What are some observations about this portion of scripture?

Reflect and Commit: (20 min.)

"Living side by side requires forgiveness for our regular failure of each other. So, who do you need to forgive today? What offense do you need to release and just let it go? Because in the end, you can't hold it and be free from it at the same time." - Pastor Brian Hughes

- How would you answer each of those questions?

Gather prayer requests and pray. (5-10 min.)

Pray: Lord, we understand that forgiveness is not optional. We also understand that you instruct us to do this because we have been forgiven so much and also because You know it is the pathway to freedom and peace and healing. We know that we cannot forgive others in our own strength, so we ask that You help us by the power of the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts and enable us to do what we cannot do on our own. We thank you in advance for helping us and we give You all the glory and honor. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.