

Discussion / Reflection Guide - "Pardon Me" Week of September 17, 2017

Read Matthew 6:12, 14-15

- "Debts" / "Trespases" are simply different words chosen by different translators in the 1500's and 1600's when translating this passage into English. Now some modern translations use the word "sins" instead. Does one of the terms have a more rich meaning to you? If so, why?
- The word "forgive" literally means to "wipe off" or "dismiss" or "send away." The idea is that you totally turn loose of the offense, wipe it off the slate of your life and let it go.
- Do you have any sins in your life that you need to ask God to "turn loose" of and wipe away from your life? Have you confessed these sins to God?

Read 1 John 1:9

- 1 John 1:9 gives us the promise that if we confess our sins God will forgive us.
- What does it mean to "confess" our sins? Does Psalms 51:17 help you better understand it?
- Do you think there is a reason Jesus said to pray "forgive us" rather than just to pray "forgive me"? What difference do you see between praying "forgive me" and praying "forgive us"?
- Why would Jesus say that we should pray for God to forgive "us"? Why would He want us to repent of the sins of our community?

- What “personal” and / or “community sins” do you need to confess to God? Spend some time doing that right now.

Read Matthew 18:21-35

- Jesus strongly suggests that God will not forgive us if we do not forgive others. Compare what Jesus says in Matthew 6:14-15 to the “tag line” of the parable in Matthew 18:35.
- In Matthew 18:35 adds we should forgive others “from your heart.” What does this mean?
- Do you think God is serious about not forgiving us if we don’t forgive others? Or is this just an exaggeration to make a point?
- Why would God make such a big deal about our forgiving others?
- Have you struggled with forgiving others? If you are sharing in a group, discuss some of your struggles to forgive.
- What has helped you in your struggle to forgive others? What has stood in the way in your struggle to forgive others?
- Peter’s question in Matthew 18:21 points out one of the struggles we often have with forgiveness: the need to forgive isn’t just a one-time thing. We often must *repeatedly* forgive people as we remember the “offense” and become resentful about it again, and again, and again. . . . Spend some time in prayer asking God to help give you the ability to forgive others from your heart, and to help you be willing to do it over and over and over again.