



Counter Culture: Week 1 — “Forgive One Another”

CONNECT: Share a funny story of an injury you experienced as a kid. *Leader: Encourage this to be lighthearted.*

GROW:

1. Culture gives us two responses to emotional injuries: “Rub some dirt on it” or “Keep the cast on it.” Which of those two responses are you more in line with?
2. Jesus has a different path that leads to true resilience: **forgiveness**. What comes to mind when you think of the word forgiveness? Is it a concept you struggle with, are fond of, or somewhere in between?
3. **Read Matthew 18:15-35.** *Leader: If your group is willing, have each person read 3-5 verses each.*
 - a. Jesus’ teaching on forgiveness is preceded by a teaching on conflict resolution. How does attempting to resolve the conflict in a healthy way aid forgiveness?
 - b. The chapter ends with a grave warning for those who do not forgive others. Do you think Christians today take this warning seriously?
4. *Leader: Guide this reflection and response time during your group. This exercise might be best to do individually to avoid gossip. It might be helpful to offer pens and paper for group members to still be able to practically respond.*
 - a. “Jesus teaches us to cancel the debt and not the person.” Who in your life have you canceled instead of forgiving? Write their name(s) down.
 - b. Ask God to remind you of the debts He has forgiven in your life.
 - c. Write a thank you note to God for His grace.
 - d. Ask God to soften your heart toward the person/people you need to forgive.
 - e. Write out this prompt inserting their name(s): “I forgive _____ because Jesus has forgiven me.”

PRAY: Pray the Lord’s prayer found in Matthew 6:9-13. Before doing so, read Matthew 6:14-15 and allow that truth to inform your prayer.

NEXT: Is there anyone you wrote down in the reflection time who you need to have a conversation with, whether it’s confronting the conflict directly or simply expressing your forgiveness to them? Ask a friend in the group to keep you accountable in doing so.