



Session 5

The Reconciling Community
week starting October 17

Forgiveness and reconciliation may seem like foreign concepts. When they do come up, they can feel forced and obligatory. The truth is, we can't give away what we haven't experienced ourselves. Jesus invites us to be conduits of forgiveness and grace, experiencing and giving away forgiveness because it was first given to us.

GETTING STARTED

From last week's Soul Training report on the results of your prayers for unity and/or how you showed love to someone with whom you have differences or disagreements.

- What is something you've said or done that you would "do-over" if you could?

DISCUSSION

1. What helps you gain a new perspective on something or someone? What steps do you take?
2. Read 2 Corinthians 5:16–6:2. In your own words, explain what reconciliation to Christ means. How is this different from how the world might understand reconciliation?
3. If "Christ's ambassador to a ministry of reconciliation" was a job description, what job responsibilities might be included?
4. When have you asked for forgiveness? *Will you forgive me?* When was the last time you forgave someone else? *You are forgiven.* What holds us back from doing this more often?
5. What does the story in Matthew 18:21–35 teach us about grace and forgiveness?
6. How has experiencing God's grace transformed you?

SOUL TRAINING

Do you need to forgive someone? Sometimes we are in a place where it feels impossible to forgive, or we don't really want to. Other times, we are ready and willing. It can help to remember that people who hurt others have often been hurt themselves. Try this: 1. reflect on 2 Corinthians 5:17–19 and John 3:16–17, and how you've been forgiven; 2. pray for someone who has hurt you. Ask God to show you more about this person and their situation. These actions may change your perspective and help you to forgive.

MEMORIZATION CHALLENGE

"That God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." 2 Corinthians 5:19

PRAY

Partner with another person. Give thanks that the Lord doesn't count our sins against us. If you haven't experienced Christ's forgiveness, this is a great opportunity to ask. As you are comfortable, confess specific things or ask for help forgiving others. Speak Jesus's word of forgiveness over each other. Hear the truth—you are forgiven.