

It's Deeper Than That – Week 5 Small Group Questions

Opening Prayer

Ice Breaker

1. Jeff told the story of stacking two baby gates in his 3-year-old son Jonah's doorway to keep him in bed at night — and Jonah still made his presence known by rattling his sippy cup across the bars like a prisoner. What's the most creative (or ridiculous) parenting hack you've seen work, or totally backfire?

Discuss

Main Scriptures: Matthew 6:14-15, 18:21-35

1. Read Matthew 6:14–15. Why do you think Jesus ties our willingness to forgive others so tightly to our experience of the Father's forgiveness?
2. Hebrews 8:12 (quoting Jeremiah 31) says God will "never again remember" our sins. Jeff said "remember" there means "hold against," not "literally forget." Does that reframe change how you think about needing to forget what someone did to you in order to forgive them?
3. Jeff said forgiveness needs to be a condition of your heart, not a condition you put on the offender ("if they would just..."). Where have you caught yourself making your forgiveness conditional on someone else's behavior or apology?
4. Read Matthew 18:27. The Greek word for "pity" the king felt means to be moved in the seat of your affections. Is there someone you know you should forgive but haven't felt that compassion toward yet? What's kept you stuck?
5. Jerry Sittser wrote, *"Forgiveness rarely happens in an instant. It's more of a process than an event... a lifelong process."* Does thinking of forgiveness as a process rather than a one-time decision take any pressure off of you? Why or why not?
6. Jeff said, *"Should is a law. Can is a gift. And you were never meant to live under the burden of one — the law — when you've already been handed the other — a gift."* What's the practical difference between feeling like you "should" forgive someone and believing you actually "can"?

Practice

Name one person you've been holding "behind bars" with conditional forgiveness — "if they would just..." This week, take one concrete step toward removing the condition, even if it's just a private prayer of release.