



Small Group Work Sheet

John 18:1-19:16 - Life Feels Out of Control!

August 11, 2013

One of the key narratives of this passage is Peter's denial of Jesus. In addition to fulfilling Scripture (Isa. 53:6) and Jesus' words from hours before (Jn. 13:38), Peter's lowest moment gives us hope in the midst of our own. It proclaims the promise of God's matchless forgiveness and unparalleled patience with fallen humanity.

Part 1: Ice Breaker

1. Do you have a hard time with forgiveness? Is it hard for you to forgive others? Is it hard for you to forgive yourself?

While this question doesn't ask for specific examples, some of you may find your Life Group is vulnerable enough and close enough that specific examples can be mentioned.

If your group isn't to the point where you feel comfortable sharing deep struggles like these, give everyone 30 seconds or so to think of an example of a deep struggle in their own life. Don't ask them to share it, but just have them keep it in mind so that way they have a reference point for the rest of the small group

Part 2: **God** forgiving **you**.

2. Read Exod. 34:5-7; Ps. 103:8-13. A.W. Tozer once wrote, "What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us." Do you think of God as a forgiving God? To what extent? How do these passages help remind us of who God is?

At first it may seem that our society emphasize the forgiveness of God more than any of his other attributes, but that isn't necessarily true. It seems that our society minimizes sin so much so that forgiveness is no longer a big deal. In reality, our society de-emphasizes the forgiveness of God because it is no longer needed.

Passages such as these remind us of the forgiving nature of God without neglecting the gravity of sinfulness. For those in your group who emphasize one attribute of God's character more than other areas, lovingly challenge them on it. "For what reason do you think that God is loving above all else?" "For what reason do you believe that God is first wrathful and second loving?" These questions will reveal a lot about your group to you, and will help you understand as a leader why some in your group struggle with forgiveness.

Part 3: **You** forgiving **you**.

3. Read John 13:36-38; 18:15-18, 25-27; Lk. 22:62. Have you ever experienced guilt similar to Peter? How did you overcome this guilt? How did Peter overcome his guilt?

Encourage the members of your group to be vulnerable during this time. Clarify with your group that this type of guilt doesn't just come from a denial of Jesus with our words, but can also come through a denial of Jesus through our actions. The truth is, we are much more likely to reject him with sinful actions than we are with our words in our context. Have we profaned the name of Jesus with our actions?

Be aware of the ways that people say they overcame this guilt. Is it gospel-centric? Or is it driven through some other means? Notice how Peter overcame his guilt—by running to Jesus. When we reflect on passages such as these, we recognize that it is the power of the gospel and the work of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from our guilt and sin. If others in your group say that they have overcome guilt in a different way, ask them to elaborate. If it seems that the gospel is missing in their conversation, encourage them toward the gospel.

4. We have a tendency to recognize in our heads the truth that God forgives us in Jesus, but that often does not translate to our hearts. Do you feel forgiven by God for your past sins? Why or why not? What are some reasons we have such a hard time forgiving ourselves when God offers us such gracious forgiveness?

The responses to this question will vary. It is often said that the longest distance on earth is the 12 inches from our head to our hearts. This will be true for many people in our life groups. Encourage open and honest discussion. This question may take up a significant time of your group.

Part 4: **You** forgiving **others**.

5. Read Matt. 18:21-35; Col. 3:12-13. Why is forgiving others a necessary part of the Christian life? Are there people who you need to forgive?

This is another reflective question. Another helpful passage is Matt. 5:21-26, which tells us that holding bitterness toward others in our hearts ruins our relationship with God. 1 John 4:20-21 says the same thing: love for God is impossible without loving (and forgiving) those around us!