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"Forgiveness is the giving, and so the receiving, of life."

[George McDonald]

ENGAGE & CONNECT

Share about a time when someone was generous to you.

OPTIONAL DEVOTIONAL RECAP

What is one thing that God taught you, convicted you of, or invited you to begin doing as you read the devotional book last week?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

"He brought me up from a desolate pit, out of the muddy clay, and set my feet on a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and they will trust in the Lord."

[Psalm 40:2-3]

BIG IDEA

Complete forgiveness is not possible apart from God. Forgiven people forgive!

PASSAGE & DISCUSSION

Matthew 18:21-35

1. What does Peter asking about forgiving "up to seven times" reveal about his understanding of forgiveness? How do you find yourself being similar to Pete's attitude?
2. What does Jesus' response to Peter teach us about the nature of forgiveness in God's kingdom?
3. How might we recognize an unwillingness to offer mercy in our own lives? Is there a particular situation or person where you need to be more merciful?
4. In the sermon we heard, *"The servant viewed the debt/debtor issue not as relational but transactional. Therefore, he was never transformed."* How does the servant's behavior (v. 28-30) reveal a misunderstanding of God's grace and forgiveness?
5. What role does humility play in this passage? How does our pride obstruct our ability to forgive others?
6. How does withholding forgiveness impact both the forgiver AND the one needing forgiveness? How have you seen that to be true in your own life?

7. How does this passage challenge you in areas where you struggle to forgive? Let's get honest and specific with one another!
8. In the sermon we heard, *"The willingness and ability to show mercy, give grace, and extend forgiveness are evidence of citizenship in the Kingdom, not requirements."* What is your response to this?

STEP OF OBEDIENCE

One truth that we must wrestle with is this: The JOY of being totally forgiven, eternally loved, and part of God's Kingdom is GREATER THAN the pain of being sinned against. Let that settle in for just a moment! Based on the Holy Spirit's wisdom, what is a step of obedience that you can take?

As Colossians 3:13 reminds us, *"Be gentle and ready to forgive; never hold grudges. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."* Here are a few questions to consider for your next step in forgiving others ...

- RESIST revenge and RELEASE hurt and resentment!
- REFUSE to celebrate (or wish for) their misfortune!
- RECIPROCATE God's grace to them!
 - Protect their dignity!
 - Do not speak ill or spread negativity!
 - Bless them if possible!
- RECEIVE empathy from the Lord!

PRAYER FOCUS

Merciful As the Father

- Let's pause to reflect on the incredible mercy and forgiveness that God has shown each of us through Jesus Christ. Take a moment to think about anyone in your life who may need your forgiveness or where you can extend mercy. Loving Father, would you soften our hearts, give us the strength to forgive, and help us reflect your boundless grace in how we treat others?

MEMORY VERSE

"Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn't collapse, because its foundation was on the rock.

(Matthew 7:24-25)

RLC RESOURCES

- **Rock Bridge RLC Website** → rockbridge.cc/red
 - This contains an overview video and links to a 40 day Bible reading plan, which complement and enhance the Red Letter Challenge series.
- **Red Letter Disciple Podcast** → [HERE](#)
 - This is a podcast by the creators of the Red Letter Challenge. It does NOT go along with the series, but does have podcasts about discipleship that will equip and encourage you. This would be best for people to listen to on their own.