**Forgiveness**

**Session Goal:** To help participants gain a better understanding of forgiveness and encourage them to extend forgiveness to others.

**So What?**

As you view the video, consider these questions.

* It is said that divorce has the same emotional impact on a person as the death of a loved one. Do you agree? Why or why not?
* How common do you think Christina’s situation is in our society? How often do you see others experience her pain and anger?
* What is it so difficult for Christiana to forgive her ex-husband and move on with her life?
* Given the two roles played in the video, what role have you played most? Are you most often friend/counselor or the one who has experienced the injustice?
* As suggested in the video, have you felt like someone needs to “earn your forgiveness”? Is that the attitude a Christian should harbor? Why or why not?

**What Does the Bible Say?**

Read Matthew 18:21-35.

In verses 21-22, what do you think Peter’s question shows about his attitude of forgiveness?

What do you think Jesus’ answer to Peter’s question teaches about forgiveness and God’s grace?

Reread Matthew 18:23-35.

How did the servant react to the king’s demands to pay his debt?

How did the king respond to the servant’s request?

If you had been forgiven an impossible debt, how would you respond to the one who had forgiven you? How would it make you feel? What would it prompt you to do?

How do you explain the difference between the relief the servant experiences when his debt is forgiven by the king compared to the reaction he shows to the debt his peer owes him?

What does the reaction of the “heavenly Father” in verse 35 teach us about our attitudes and reactions concerning forgiving others?

What insights do Jesus’ teachings give us about forgiveness?

**How Does This Affect My Life?**

What might make you unwilling to extend the same kind of forgiveness that you have received?

What kinds of circumstances keep you from being able to forgive others?

How does understanding how much you have been forgiven help you to look on others with mercy?

Is there someone in your life that you need to forgive? If so, what insights have you gained from the study that can help you?

In the video, Melissa tells Christina she isn’t alone because she is part of the Body of Christ. How can having supportive Christian friends help you in a painful situation, such as Christiana’s? Are you someone’s Melissa?

**Now What?**

Option One

Write a “Thank You” to God for the complete and freeing forgiveness He has given to you.

What are some things you will try to do differently as you find yourself in conflict with others this week?

How can the group help you to forgive others?

Option Two

Are you ready to release a situation and people to God? If so, talk to God about the person or issue in your life that needs forgiveness.

When you are ready, write the person’s name and issue on a piece of paper. Crush and discard the paper symbolizing your willingness to release the hurts you have received.

Thank God for His total forgiveness and mercy to you. Ask Him for His help in the difficult process of offering forgiveness.