

Do the Work | Week 3 - Reconcile the Bottom Line**Message Big Idea**

To restore relationships, we must do the work of forgiveness.

Scripture

Matthew 18:21-35

Opening Questions

1. How have you been able to BLESS others in the last couple of weeks?
2. If you could only listen to one song for the rest of your life, what would it be?
3. To restore relationships, we must learn to do the work of forgiveness. What makes forgiveness challenging? Is there anything forgiveness that comes naturally to you? Explain.

Bible Discussion

4. Read Matthew 18:21-35. What stood out to you about this story?
5. How would you put the point of this story in your own words?

Life Application

6. N. T. Wright wrote about this passage, saying, “Forgiveness is more like the air in your lungs. There’s only room for you to inhale the next lungful when you’ve just breathed out the previous one. If you insist on withholding it, refusing to give someone else the kiss of life they may desperately need, you won’t be able to take any more in yourself, and you will suffocate very quickly.” What have you found when it comes to being forgiven and forgiving others?
7. Lewis Smedes famously said, “Forgiveness means to set the prisoner free, only to find the prisoner was you.” How can forgiving someone else set you free?
8. Look at the following steps to forgiveness. What steps could you take to forgive someone else?
 - A. Forgiveness involves admitting, “I was hurt.” Forgiveness is not denying our hurt or our anger or pain. It’s hard to forgive if we deny we have been hurt.
 - B. Forgiveness involves naming how you were hurt. It helps to be specific. How were you hurt? Betrayed? Lied to? Abandoned? Disrespected?
 - C. Forgiveness involves a decision to cancel the debt the person owes you. Anne Lamott “Forgiveness means it finally becomes unimportant that you hit back.” We have to decide to forgive.
 - D. Forgiveness involves reminding yourself of your decision. Sometimes it takes a while to slowly let go of the hurt and anger we have toward one another. It’s a process, and it takes time.
9. Is there another person in your life from whom you need forgiveness? How could you approach them to ask for it?