

**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

**Points to Keep In Mind**

1. Forgiveness is not saying that what happened was OK. Forgiveness does not mean a lack of justice or even consequences for the harm or offense that was done. Forgiveness does not erase the pain or make the need for repair work just disappear.

Author Janis Abrahms Spring says: “We can’t—and won’t—just dust off an injury, pretend that nothing happened, and embrace the person who injured us. Regardless of what we may have been taught, a quick, one-sided, kiss-and-make-up response doesn’t seem real or right. For Genuine Forgiveness to take place, we often need much more.” - Janis Abrahms Spring

2. Forgiveness is not forgetting and acting as though it never happened. Sometimes we forgive, and then we also have to set a boundary. Sometimes we forgive, and then there is repair work to do. Sometimes we forgive, and healthy distance or clarified expectations are necessary before the relationship can be restored.

Author Lewis Smedes writes: “Forgetting, in fact, may be a dangerous way to escape the inner surgery of the heart that we call forgiving. There are two kinds of pain that we forget. We forget hurts too trivial to bother about. We forget pains too horrible for our memory to manage.”

3. Forgiving someone doesn’t mean that the relationship is automatically repaired or that we must trust the other person immediately. Forgiveness does not mean immediate reconciliation. Sometimes there is a good reason not to trust someone immediately again. It is not about placing ourselves back into a situation where we can again get hurt by that same person. If you invite the person who hurt you back into your life after forgiveness, and if they come honestly, love can move you toward a new and healed relationship. Reconciliation depends on the person you forgive as much as it depends on you. Sometimes they don’t come back, and you must be healed alone.

**Additional Questions and Resources**

1. Where do you see God at work in your life right now?
2. What next steps do you feel called to take in your faith journey?
3. Have you considered getting baptized? [communitychristian.org/baptism/](http://communitychristian.org/baptism/)
4. For more resources on self-growth and a list of therapists, see: [communitychristian.org/mentalhealth](http://communitychristian.org/mentalhealth)