

ENCOUNTERING GOD THROUGH FORGIVING OTHERS LIFE GROUP LESSON

“You meant it for evil but God meant it for good, to save many lives.” (Gen. 50:20)

Introduction:

In this lesson we are learning how to move from betrayal and hurt to favor and freedom, the way Joseph did through forgiveness. The goal is to help us move from our prisons of hurt to the palace of opportunity and purpose. It involves a radical faith in God’s ability to redeem life’s worse stuff. To redeem means God doesn’t just erase the memory of the bad, but He takes the terrible and transforms it into an opportunity for His good and perfect plan to be revealed. The key is learning the biblical way to forgive.

With this lesson, I am sending a tool we call the *forgiveness tool*. I highly recommend individuals use it, then come to a prayer partner to pray and declare freedom and transformation from the hurts of the past.

1. **Icebreaker:** We talked about a mosaic in which broken pieces of glass are fitted together into a work of art. Is there something you have gone through that at the time was so hard or hurtful but now, because of what God did you look back on as something of a gift?

(**Note:** Most people when asked what’s the most important lesson they have ever learned in life, talk about a very difficult time they went through.)

2. Below are two scriptural warnings about the dangers of unforgiveness. What are some ways you’ve seen the choice not to forgive bring bondage to people’s lives?

“See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.” (Hebrews 12:15 NIV)

“A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle.” (Proverbs 18:19 NKJV)

3. In the message, Sharon talked about recognizing symptoms in your attitudes or key relationships where offenses have formed. Describe how those symptoms might look in your heart?

4. Why do you think the Bible describes forgiveness as freedom and the gift you give yourself? Why is it important not to just forgive occasionally but to adopt an attitude of taking the high road and a *lifestyle*, that daily flows in the giving of forgiveness?

5. How does believing and standing in faith on God's sovereign ability to take what the devil meant for evil and use it for good, help us get past things that would otherwise make us bitter?

6. Which of the following tools of forgiveness seem to especially apply to something you are dealing with right now?

- a. Confess and don't cover up where you are hurt.
- b. Give yourself permission to grieve the loss someone else's or your own sin has cost you. Let a friend help you.
- c. Take it to the cross; forgiveness is something you might not feel you can do but Jesus did. Trust His cross and His power in you to remove the hurt.
- d. Forgive by faith. Forgiveness is not a feeling; it is a decision. Speak to the mountain and to the person in your mind and declare them forgiven.
- e. Choose to put the incident behind you, knowing what you put behind you loses power and what you put in front of you gains power.
- f. Ask and receive because God has something to replace the bad in the past with something good and beautiful in the future.
- g. Use the forgiveness tool.