

INTERACTIVE TEACHING/LEARNING GUIDE
Lesson 13

SESSION TITLE: "FORGIVING ONE ANOTHER"

FOCAL PASSAGE: (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13)

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner follow through with forgiving others or seeking forgiveness in his/her family, church and/or SGM.

I. Creating Interest in the Series (Hook)

A. Object Lesson – A \$1, \$5 or \$10 bill.

Display the bill. Ask – Who would like this \$ bill?

State – I am going to give one of you this bill but first I'm going to do this. Proceed to crumple the bill. Then ask, "Who still wants it?" The hands will still remain in the air. Next state, well what if I do this? Drop it on the ground and grind it into the floor. Then pick it up all crumpled and dirty. "Now who wants it?" Hands will still be in the air.

State – No matter what I did to this bill you still want it because it does not decrease in value. Many times our lives are dirty, crumpled and damaged by the foolish decisions we make. We may feel like we are worthless but no matter what we have done we will never lose our value in God's eyes. We should be willing to forgive one another as Christ has forgiven us.

Share – The following information:

Martha Stewart made a terrible mistake, she was given a chance to come clean to confess her wrongdoing and seek forgiveness. She chose to hide her wrong choices and a jury convicted her on every count. Now she faces a stiffer penalty plus a damaged reputation.

Ask – If Martha Stewart would have come clean do you think the American public would have been quick to forgive or not?

State – Today we are going to discuss how important it is to forgive one another in our SGM relationships, church and families.

B. Optional Method -- Share the following:

After 125 years, the infamous feud between the Hatfields and McCoys is finally history. Sixty descendants of the original clans gathered on Saturday, June 14, 2003, in Pikefield, Kentucky, to sign a document declaring an official end to more than a century of hatred and bloodshed.

Most think the feuding between the McCoys of Kentucky and Hatfields of West Virginia began in 1878 when Randolph McCoy accused one of the Hatfields of stealing a hog. The Hatfields won the "hog war" when a McCoy cousin sided with the opposing clan.

Feelings festered and other incidents occurred that finally resulted in the shooting death of Ellison Hatfield in 1882. Retaliation begat retaliation until the feud claimed 11 more family members over the next ten years. Subsequent conflicts between the two clans have involved court battles over timber rights and cemetery plots.

The treaty calling for peace reads: "We do hereby and formally declare an official end to all hostilities, implied, inferred, and real, between the families, now and forevermore. We ask by God's grace and love that we be forever remembered as those that bound together the hearts of two families to form a family of freedom in America."

Reo Hatfield, who first thought of the ceremony, said, "We're not saying you don't have to fight, because sometimes you do have to fight. But you don't have to fight forever."

Although the treaty was largely symbolic, both the governor of Kentucky and the governor of West Virginia were present for the nationally televised ceremony. *Stephen Leon Alligood, "American Profile," CBS News.com (6-14-03)*

State – What an example of forgiveness, overcoming 125 years of bickering and hate.

A study conducted by the University of Michigan and partly funded by the National Institute of Mental Health, found young adults aged 18-44 were less likely to forgive others than middle aged (45-64) and older adults (65 and up). Younger adults were also less likely to believe they had been forgiven by God. Why would this be so?

People who forgive reported decreased psychological distress, including fewer feelings of restlessness, hopelessness and nervousness. *Journal of Adult Development 2001, Dec. 31, 2001*

State – Today we are going to discuss how important it is to forgive one another in our SGM relationships, church and families.

C. Optional Method – Movie Clip - “Antwone Fisher”

Start: 01:11:10
Stop: 01:13:45
DVD scene 20

Synopsis: Based on a true story, the film *Antwone Fisher*, tells of a young man who grew up in an abusive foster home. Over the years, Antwone grew bitter towards his natural family for giving him up. By the time he enlisted in the Navy, his anger got him into so many fist fights that he was sent to Navy psychologist Jerome Davenport (played by Denzel Washington), who becomes a father figure to Antwone.

After they have built trust with each other, Antwone shares a powerful poem with Davenport. At this critical juncture, his counselor raises the key issue that Antwone must deal with to find healing.

The conversation takes place just after the Thanksgiving meal at his counselor's house. Antwone gives Davenport a folded piece of paper, and Davenport reads it aloud thoughtfully.

"Who will cry for the little boy
Lost and all alone?
Who will cry for the little boy
Abandoned without his own?
Who will cry for the little boy?
He cried himself to sleep.
Who will cry for the little boy
Who never had for keeps?
Who will cry for the little boy
Who walked the burning sand?
Who will cry for the little boy
The boy inside the man?
Who will cry for the little boy
Who knew well hurt and pain?
Who will cry for the little boy
Who died and died again?
Who will cry for the little boy?
A good boy he tried to be.
Who will cry for the little boy
Who cries inside of me?"

Davenport says, "This is excellent, Antwone. You're good because your honest. You are more honest than most people. Even in your anger—the only thing your not honest with yourself about is your need to find your own family. Your natural family. You're upset with them because you feel they didn't come to your rescue. Maybe they didn't know.

Antwone replies bitterly, "How could they not have known?"

Davenport says, "That's the question you need to ask. 'Regard without ill will despite an offense.' That's Webster's definition of forgiveness."

Antwone says, "Why do I have to forgive?"

Davenport answers, "To free yourself, so you can get on with your life."

Antwone Fisher(2002) from 20th Century Fox; written by Antwone Fisher, Directed by Denzel Washington

Display and State – The following quote:

Webster defines forgiveness – “Regard without ill will despite an offense.” Do you agree with Navy psychologist Jerome Davenport that you have to forgive to free yourself, so you can get on with your life?

State - Today we are going to discuss how important it is to forgive one another in our SGM relationships, church and families.

BOOK Getting Into the Word

A. Utilize - the Discussion Guide to examine the scripture.

LOOK Getting the Word into Life

A. Place members into groups and have them complete the group assignments.

TOOK Conclusion

IV. Conclusion (Took)

A. Movie Clip – “What About Bob”

Start 46:45

Stop 49:30

Synopsis:

Bob has major phobias. He seeks the help of Dr. Marvin. He follows him on vacation and proceeds to make his life miserable. In this scene Dr. Marvin loses it and angrily pushes Bob into the lake. After helping Bob clean up, Dr. Marvin grudgingly (at his families insistence) apologizes and invites Bob to dinner.

Dr. Marvin really was not sincere when he apologized; he still had ill feelings towards Bob, which are played out in the rest of the movie. In fact the anger and unforgiving attitude cause Dr. Marvin to eventually have a nervous breakdown.

Holding grudges and staying angry at others can have serious consequences in our lives. Let's work this week to resolve any relationship problems, especially if they exist in our SGM family.

B. Optional Method

Close with an extended time of prayer. As people are praying encourage any member who needs to seek forgiveness or forgive to find the person(s) and make things right. (Note: This would need to be done only in our SGM where members know one another extremely well) Otherwise have prayer for God to protect the great spirit of love and forgiveness in your SGM.

C. Optional Method – Share the following story:

Taysi Abu Saada (Tass) was a Fatah sniper, trained to kill Jews. His job was to instruct children about their duty to fight and kill Israelis. Moran Rosenblit was a soldier in the Israeli army who became bitter after a suicide bomber killed seven of his friends.

In light of today's political climate in the Middle East, you wouldn't expect these two men to tolerate each other, much less be friends. But today, these former enemies talk to each other almost every day, and share a deep friendship and love. Tass left the Middle East and moved to Kansas City where he worked with Charlie, who introduced Tass to Jesus, who changed the PLO fighter's life.

At the same time, God was working in the heart of Moran. After his friends were killed by the suicide bomber, Moran was not able to go to the funeral because he felt such deep inward pain. Two months later, two helicopters collided, killing 86 soldiers. Though none were Moran's friends, the mounting death toll left him more depressed. A Swedish girlfriend inspired Moran to leave Israel. He traveled to England and then the United States, where he roomed with a Christian family in California. Through this family's example, and the witness of friends, Moran received Jesus as His Messiah and was baptized.

As Moran grew in his new faith, a friend invited him to a conference for Arab and Jewish believers. Moran said, "I had friends who were Arabs, but I always watched my back to make sure they wouldn't stab me in the back." Israelis cannot trust Arabs and Arabs cannot trust Israelis-that's a reality. Though not happy about it, Moran accepted an invitation to share his testimony at another conference. As he finished talking, a Palestinian man approached him.

"I was a Fatah fighter," Tass told him. He looked Moran in the eyes and added, "I love you" Moran said, "I can't explain what that did to my heart when he said that." Tass asked Moran to forgive him in the name of his people for his friends who were killed by the suicide bomber. Moran also sought forgiveness for not being able to love and trust Tass and for his anger.

Since that conference in March 2001, Moran and Tass speak to one another daily as their friendship grows. These former enemies now pray together in the name of Jesus-the one and only true God. Tass says, "Jesus touched my heart. It goes to show the world there is hope in Jesus."

Moran adds, "Do you want a picture of the solution for the Middle East? If God changed my heart and Tass' heart, he can change anyone's heart."

What an extreme picture of forgiveness. It's incredible what the power of God can do to bring healing and forgiveness.

Close in prayer for God to protect our SGM.

DISCUSSION GUIDE (Teacher's Copy)

1. List the negative actions that Paul warned the Ephesians to avoid in (Eph. 4:31).

- a. bitterness d. clamor
- b. wrath e. slander
- c. anger f. malice

2. What are the positive actions listed in (Eph. 4:32a)?

- a. Be kind to one another
- b. Be tender-hearted

3. What is the basis for forgiveness listed in (Eph. 4:32b)?

We are to forgive because God has forgiven us through Christ.

4. Why is it difficult to forgive others who have harmed you?

5. Why is it difficult to seek forgiveness from someone you have harmed?

6. What are the implications of the following passages?

- a. (Matt. 6:14-15) **If you do not forgive men you will not be forgiven**
- b. (Mark 11:25) **When you come before God you should come before Him clean having forgiven others so that you may be forgiven**

7. Do you believe these implications? Really?

8. Is there anyone in your life who you have not forgiven? If so, what steps do you need to take to forgive them?

9. Is there anyone in your life with whom you need to seek forgiveness? If so, what steps do you need to seek forgiveness?

10. What is your responsibility if a person rejects your attempt at forgiveness?

Group 1 Read the following story and discuss the questions that follow.

In August 1984, after ten seasons with the Chicago Bears as place kicker, Bob Thomas was notified by the Bears' management that he was being cut. Thomas, a born-again Christian, waited until he knew the locker room would be cleared of players to clear out his things. He didn't have the emotional strength to face the players he'd grown to love. His celebrated teammate, Walter Payton, another believer, had learned of Thomas' termination and waited alone at the kicker's locker after the others had left. When Bob saw Walter, he buried his face in the running back's chest and allowed his friend and fellow Christian to comfort him.

After Walter Payton's death in the fall of 1999, Bob Thomas recalled that emotional moment in the Bears locker room. "To share your grief with a Hall of Fame running back with that kind of compassion, empathy and ability is really my fondest memory of the guy we called Sweetness."

Christy Gutowski, Daily Herald (11-2-99).

What role does compassion play in forgiveness?

How would you rate your SGM on compassion and kindness?

Are there any ill feelings in your SGM? If so, how could these be resolved?

Pray for God to protect the fellowship in your SGM.

Group 2 Read the following story and discuss the questions that follow.

You may have heard a story about one of the seven astronauts by the name of David Brown. Just before the flight took off, Brown said these words to a NASA engineer. He said, "If this thing goes down, when they find the error, you find the person or people who made the mistake and tell them . . . I harbor no ill feelings."

What are your first reactions to this astronaut's gesture?

How would you rate your SGM on being a forgiving fellowship?

Are there any ill feelings in your SGM? If so, how could these be resolved?

Pray for God to protect the fellowship in your SGM.

Group 3 Read the following story and discuss the questions that follow.

Randy Frazee, pastor of Pantego Bible Church in Fort Worth, Texas, shared this story:

I remember seeing a picture of a husband and wife in a gentleman's office. I said, "Nice picture." I turned around and looked at the man, and he had tears in his eyes. So I asked him, "Why are you crying?"

He said, "There was a time in our marriage when I was unfaithful to my wife, and she found out about it. She was so deeply hurt and injured she was going to leave me and take the kids with her. I was overwhelmed at the mistake I had made, and I shut the affair down. I went to my wife in total brokenness. Knowing I did not deserve for her to answer in the affirmative, I asked her to forgive me. And she forgave me.

"This picture was taken shortly after that. When I see this picture, I see a woman who forgave me. I see a

woman who was willing to stand with me in this picture. So when you see this picture you say, 'Nice picture.' But when I see this picture I see my life given back to me again."

Randy Frazee, pastor of Pantego Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas, from sermon preached 6-24-01, "Uncommon Confessions"

Share an example in your family life where you had to forgive.

What are examples in an SGM family where forgiveness is evident?

Are there any ill feelings in your SGM? If so, how could they be resolved?

Pray for God to protect the fellowship in your SGM.

Group 4 Read the following story and discuss the questions that follow.

"I'm pregnant."

After Cori, my 21-year-old, unwed daughter, said those words, I went through all kinds of emotions. Yes, it would be embarrassing. I wrote the book Sanctified Sex. I had criss-crossed the country telling thousands of young adults like my daughter to "just say no." Yes, it broke my heart. I stayed awake many nights listening to my wife's muffled sobs. I came home many days to referee a family feud.

Cori has always made it clear that she likes the wilder side of life. She has always learned her lessons the hard way.

My wife, Roberta, and I have always wanted our home to be a place where no-strings-attached love could grow. Throughout the crisis, I have asked God, "How do I model sensitivity and strength when my family is falling apart?" God replied with several questions: "Will you quit, Haman? Will you quit loving your daughter? Will you quit investing in her life? Will you quit forgiving her as you have been forgiven?"

My answer continues to be: "No, I won't quit, Lord. With your help, my family will make it."

Haman Cross, Jr., pastor of Rosedale Park Baptist Church in Detroit. Men of Integrity, Vol. 1, no. 1.

How forgiving would you be if you were in the shoes of this couple?

Share examples in your family life where you had to forgive.

What are examples in an SGM family where forgiveness is evident?

Are there any ill feelings in your SGM? If so, how could they be resolved?

Pray for God to protect the fellowship in your SGM.

Word for the Week

"Praying One Another"

James 5:16-18

Monday *Read James 5:13-18; 1 John 1:9*

- Ø You've heard it said, "Confession is good for the soul." Do you believe this to be true?
- Ø How does healing take place according to verse 16?
- Ø From what are we being healed?
Spend some time confessing known sins and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any sins of ignorance.

Tuesday - *Read James 5:16-18*

- Ø If Jesus is our only mediator, who forgives sins, why does James tell us to confess our sins to each other?
- Ø What prevents or inhibits us from confessing our sins to one another?
- Ø What responsibility do Christians have to one another?
Listen to Steven Curtis Chapman's song "Let us Pray".

Wednesday - *Read James 5:16-18; James 4:15; Mark 11:24-26*

- Ø Is prayer a powerful and dynamic activity in your life or just a comfortable ritual with few rewards?
- Ø What are the elements of powerful and affective prayer? And who imparts these prayers?
- Ø Does God always grant the requests of righteous people?
- Ø What step of faith do you need to take in your prayer life this week?
Listen to Darlene Zschech's latest release about prayer.

Thursday - *Read James 5:16-18; 1 Kings 17:1-7; 1 Kings 18:1-46*

- Ø Why does James use Elijah as an example of prayer?
- Ø How are we just like Elijah? What is Elijah's source of power?
- Ø What encouragement can be gained from the story of Elijah?
Spend time praising God through adoration and song.

Friday - *Read James 5:16-18*

- Ø Describe a time when God clearly answered your prayers?
- Ø What is your most memorable experience in prayer with others?
- Ø Who can help you stay disciplined in your prayer life?
Listen to Michael W. Smith's song "Pray for Me".

REAL LIFE
“Forgiving One Another”
(Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13)

(Exegetical . . . What it meant to the Ephesians/Colossians back THEN)
THE MANNER IN WHICH THE EPHESIANS/COLOSSIANS WERE TO BE/PRACTICE
COMPASSION, KINDNESS, HUMILITY, MEEKNESS,
AND LONGSUFFERING TOWARD ONE ANOTHER,
BY BEARING WITH ONE ANOTHER AND FORGIVING EACH OTHER, WAS JUST
AS GOD/THE LORD HAD FORGIVEN THEM).

- I. The Manner in which the Ephesians were to Be kind and compassionate to one another, by Forgiving each other, was just as God in Christ had Forgiveness them, (Ephesians 4:32).
 - A. The Content of Paul’s specific command to the Ephesians (in the context of his general command “To Live a life worthy of your Calling,” 4:1) was that they Be kind and compassionate to one another, (32a).
 - B. The Manner in which the Ephesians were to Be kind and compassionate to one another was by Forgiving each other, (32b).
 - C. The Manner in which the Ephesians were to Forgive each other was just as God in Christ had Forgiveness them, (32c).
- II. The Manner in which the Colossians were to Practice compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering, by Bearing with one another and Forgiving each other, was just as the Lord had Forgiveness them, (Colossians 3:13).
 - A. [The Content of Paul’s command to the Colossians was that they Practice (Put On) compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering, (3:12).]
 - B. The Manner in which the Colossians were to Practice compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering was by Bearing with one another and Forgiving each other whatever complaint one might Have against another, (13a).
 - C. The Manner in which the Colossians were to Forgive each other whatever complaint one might Have against another was just as the Lord had Forgiveness them, (13b).

NOTE: In these parallel passages the main verbs were commands related to the lifestyle of a Christian within the church, Christ’s Master-planned community. Paul commanded the Ephesians to BE compassionate and kind toward one another. He commanded the Colossians to PUT ON compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering. In both texts the present middle participles (forgiving) describe how such characteristics were to be applied in real life situations. The Ephesians and Colossians were to BE/PUT ON by forgiving each other. In other words, the act of forgiving IS being/putting on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering.

Both texts build toward the climatic “just as.” Paul gave a further “how to.” The way to forgive one another was “just as” God in Christ/the Lord had (aorist tense) forgiven them. In other words, when they forgave one another in the same way God/Jesus had forgiven them, they would be living as a biblically functioning community.

	Command (present tense imperative)	Manner (present tense participle)	Manner (conjunction with aorist indicative)
Ephesians 4:32	"Be"	by "forgiving"	"just as God...forgave"
Colossians 3:12-13	"Put on"	by "forgiving"	"just as the Lord forgave"

THE MASTER-PLANNED COMMUNITY FORGIVES ONE ANOTHER.

- I. The Master-planned Community Practices compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering, (Eph 4:32a; Col 3:12).
- II. The Master-planned Community Practices “community” by Forgiving One Another, (Eph 4:32b; Col 3:13a).
- III. The Master-planned Community Forgives one another Just As God in Christ has Forgiven them, (Eph 4:32c; Col 3:13b).

(Pedagogical . . . What it means for us NOW) FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER.

- I. Our Goal is to Live as a Biblically Functioning Community.
 - A. When Christians live in community God gets glory, (Acts 2:42-47).
 - B. Community comes from BEING compassionate and kind, (Eph 4:32a).
 - C. Community comes from PRACTICING compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering, (Col 3:12).
 - D. Our Goal is to Live as a Biblically Functioning Community.
- II. But, even Christians SIN AGAINST One Another.
 - A. We have been “Called” to live worthy of Christ, (Eph 4:1; Col 3:12).
 - B. But we are not yet perfect.
 - C. Even Christians SIN AGAINST One Another.
- III. Christians demonstrate community by Forgiving One Another, (Eph 4:32b; Col 3:13a).
 - A. Revenge is not a Christian option.
 - B. Withdrawal is not a Christian option.
 - C. Bitterness is not a Christian option.
 - D. Christians FORGIVE One Another.
- IV. The Model of Christian forgiveness is God in Christ, (Eph 4:32c, Col 3:13b).
 - A. God paid the price of forgiving, (Eph 1:7).
 - B. God forgives completely, (Psalm 103:3).
 - C. God forgives those who confess, (1 John 1:9).
- V. Forgive One Another.
 - A. Everyone needs forgiveness.
 - B. You cannot give a more God-like gift.