

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



From Grudging to Forgiving

March 30 & 31, 2019

Jesus calls us from holding a grudge to extending forgiveness, but most of us struggle with that journey. Holding a grudge gives us the illusion of power, as if we're somehow punishing the one who has wounded us. But ultimately, we are the ones who suffer. The parable of the unforgiving servant confronts us with our struggle to forgive but also points us to the power that can truly transform our hearts: the love and forgiveness of God extended to us through Jesus.

SCRIPTURE TEXT : MATTHEW 18:21-35

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

Chances are that Jesus' original audience, as well as Matthew's audience, heard Jesus' words through the legalism of Rabbinic teaching. The Rabbis taught that a person could be forgiven once, but no more. To forgive more than once was to tolerate sin and showed that the sinner's initial repentance was not sincere. So, Jesus' suggestion in the previous verses (15-17) that disciples be forgiven three times seems pretty generous. At least it would have seemed generous to a Jewish audience. But Peter seems to want greater clarity. And maybe Peter speaks for all of us here. We'd all like to know just what the rules of the forgiveness game really are, wouldn't we? Just what's expected of us?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What parts of the parable stand out to you?
- When have you experienced outrageous, undeserved forgiveness in a human relationship?
- When have you found it challenging to forgive? What made it difficult? What helped you to let go of your grudge?
- Do you find it more difficult to forgive others or to forgive yourself? Why?

APPLICATION: This week, be honest with yourself. Is there a grudge you've been holding onto? Is there a step you can take towards forgiveness? Ask the Lord to guide you.