



LIFE GROUPS 2019

NLC Life Group Study

Week of October 13, 2019

DANGEROUS PRAYERS | Forgive Them

Life Group Schedule

30 MIN Eat, Meet & Greet

15 MIN Ice Breaker Game: **Whose Story is it?** This icebreaker game lets you hear some fun, fascinating, and surprising stories. Pass out paper and pen and have everyone take a few minutes to write a personal experience. (The stranger, the better!) Fold the papers and put them in a basket, bag or box. Have three people at a time sit in front of the group. The leader randomly picks a slip of paper and hands it to the three people. Each member of the trio reads the paper aloud and then adds some details to the story. The group guesses if the story really belongs to one of the three and, if so, to which one.

TRANSITION: As you're gathering, spend some time in **WORSHIP & PRAYER.**

45 MIN | DANGEROUS PRAYERS | FORGIVE THEM

- We often pray safe prayers:
 - > God, protect me.
 - > God, watch over me.
 - > God, help me.
 - > God, bless me.
 - > God, do this for me.
- There's nothing **WRONG** with these prayers, but they are safe.
- Our dangerous prayer today is a touchy one: **FORGIVE THEM.**

READ LUKE 23:32-34

- After that, the soldiers gambled for his clothes, and the people mocked him and hung a sign over his head, "The King of the Jews."
- Jesus gave grace in the midst of rejection.
- One of life's realities is that people do things that hurt us.
 - > Some of you have had friends that you trusted stab you in the back.
 - > Some of you have been ridiculed, bullied, and hated.
 - > Some of you have been misunderstood. Taken advantage of.
 - > Some of you have been abused. Verbally, physically, sexually.
 - > Some of you have had major wounds from your marriage.

READ MARK 11:24-25

- Maybe the reason our prayer life doesn't feel strong is we've held onto some grudge or we have a little bit of bitterness that has crept in!
 - > The failure to forgive leads to other failures.
- Your relationship with God is interconnected with your relationships with others.
 - > Because of Jesus we can approach him. But we have to approach him with a clean heart.
- Your prayer life and your spiritual life will grow deeper when you are right with God **AND** right with others.

WHY IS FORGIVENESS SO DANGEROUS?

1. Because it is uncommon.

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:13-15

- Many of God's ways are uncommon:
 - › It is uncommon to live for God by faith.
 - › It is uncommon to be a man and be humble and teachable.
 - › It is uncommon to save your virginity for marriage.
 - › It is uncommon to for college students to pray and fast for God .
 - › It is uncommon to spend time out of your busy schedule serving.
 - › It is uncommon to be generous and honor God with your money.
 - › It is uncommon to speak life to others and not gossip.
 - › Forgiveness is uncommon.
- What IS common is unforgiveness, bitterness, and offense.

READ MATTHEW 24:10

2. Because it is uncomfortable.

- Just because you forgive others DOES NOT mean what they did wasn't wrong.
 - › They messed up. They were wrong.
 - › If we say it wasn't a big deal then we cheapen how powerful forgiveness is.
- Forgiveness is uncomfortable because we feel like if we forgive someone then we have to trust them.
 - › Biblically, we are commanded to forgive people. We are NOT commanded to trust people.
 - › Forgiveness is what you do. Restoring trust is what they do.

READ 1 PETER 2:23

3. Because it is unfair.

READ COLOSSIANS 3:13

- It doesn't feel fair. The reality is that it's not fair that we are forgiven.
 - › Read Ephesians 6:12
- "We don't wrestle against flesh and blood" means this is a spiritual fight, not a physical one.
 - › People are not the enemy. The ENEMY is our enemy!
 - › How do you fight back? With grace.

4. Because it is unconditional.

- How many times should we forgive?

READ MATTHEW 18:21-25

- Jesus wasn't saying, "forgive 490 times," but "forgive completely and continually."

FORGIVENESS IS A COMMAND AND A CHOICE.

- God commands it, but you have a choice.

Q1. As you listened to the sermon this weekend, did you have a mental list of names you were scrolling through of people who have you? Maybe just one name?

Q2. How have you been able to handle offenses in a healthy way?

Prayer Activation: Say, “Tonight we will deal with offense in our lives. Let’s pray. “Holy Spirit, we invite you to bring to mind any offense we have been carrying, and ask You to examine our hearts and speak truth.”

- › Close your eyes and ask the Holy Spirit to show you anyone who has offended you or that you have negative feelings towards.
- › After doing this, ask “Is God asking you to forgive someone? Is there something you need to confess? Sometimes we develop sinful patterns to protect ourselves. Let the Holy Spirit speak to you.” [pause]
- › Encourage the participants to confess to Jesus any offense they have been holding against [person’s or people’s name(s)], repent of holding offense, and receive his forgiveness. [pause]
- › After doing this, invite the participants to pray in declaration, “God, because Jesus has forgiven me, I receive your forgiveness, and I release your forgiveness towards [this person].” [pause]
- Ask group members if anyone would like to share what they experienced.

Q3. Think about people in your life who may still be offensive. (You may have changed, but that doesn’t mean they have changed!) Practically speaking, what can you do, how can you demonstrate forgiveness and compassion towards them?

TAKE PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAY OVER NEEDS