



FOR LEADERS ONLY

GOD VIEW:

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN FORGIVENESS AND GOD'S CHARACTER, AS SHOWN THROUGH GOD'S BIG STORY

FORGIVENESS IS A REFLECTION OF THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

No matter how much we mess up, God will always forgive us. Jesus even chose to forgive those who were crucifying Him. Because God forgives us, we should work hard to forgive others. We can decide that someone who has wronged us doesn't have to pay. With God's help, we can free ourselves from the weight of anger and bitterness, while giving the other person an opportunity to rewrite the story.

WEEK 1

We start the month with an interesting moment from Jesus' life, found in **Luke 7:36-50**. We find Jesus at the home of a Pharisee. While Jesus was there, a woman with a bad reputation stopped by with an expensive jar of perfume. She cried and used her tears to wash Jesus' feet, then anointed them with perfume. The Pharisee was upset that Jesus would let a woman like this near him. Jesus responded with a parable to explain why this woman had honored Him so much. She understood something about forgiveness that the Pharisees missed.

Bottom Line: **Everyone needs forgiveness.** We can't escape it. At some point, even if what we did was unintentional, we'll hurt someone we know. We'll need to apologize, and hopefully, we'll receive that person's forgiveness. As much as others need forgiveness, we need it too. When we have this perspective, it levels the playing field. We get the chance to participate in offering forgiveness that can make things right with others. Because we need forgiveness, we should be willing to forgive people in our lives too.

WEEK 2

In week 2, we find Jesus interacting with an unexpected person in **Luke 19:1-10**: Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a tax collector working for Rome. He earned a reputation for taking advantage of his fellow Jewish people. Zacchaeus was considered an outcast by many, so he must have been shocked when Jesus asked to come over to his home for a meal. When Zacchaeus encountered Jesus,

he changed. He went back to the people he had cheated and returned four times as much money as he took from them.

Bottom Line: **When you forgive others, it can change them.** When God forgives us, it changes us from the inside out. The same can be true when you forgive others. You never know what can happen when you take the first step toward forgiveness. When you decide to reach out and offer forgiveness, it can change the way the other person sees you, the situation, and the impact of their actions.

WEEK 3

In week 3, we discover one of Jesus' parables recorded for us in **Matthew 18:21-35**. Jesus told this parable because Peter asked a question about forgiveness. Peter might have thought he was doing pretty well to say he'd forgive someone seven times, but Jesus raised the stakes and said we ought to forgive others even more. Jesus showed what this meant with a parable about a servant who was shown incredible forgiveness, yet wouldn't offer forgiveness to someone else.

Bottom Line: **Forgive others because God forgives you.** God's love for us is huge. That love drives God to forgive us when we do something wrong. God can help us to forgive people in our life too. When we realize how much God has forgiven us, we can turn around and forgive people who might hurt us. This might be difficult, but God can give us the help we need to love others and show forgiveness.

WEEK 4

We end the month in **Luke 15:11-32**, when Jesus shared a parable to help people understand God's amazing grace and forgiveness. A son came to his father and asked for his share of the inheritance. This broke the father's heart, but he went ahead and gave the son what he wanted. The son wasted all of the money and



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hit rock bottom. That's when he decided to go home to his father and ask for forgiveness. The father welcomed him home with open arms and threw a giant party for him. His older brother, on the other hand, chose not to forgive and became angry with his brother. He not only missed out on a party, but he also missed out on rebuilding a relationship with his brother.

Bottom Line: **God will always forgive you.** Jesus' parable is such an amazing reminder of God's love. God's grace and forgiveness is so deep and wide. When we come to God and ask for forgiveness, God is there waiting with open arms, offering unfailing love that restores the relationship we've broken. This is all possible because of Jesus. We pray that every kid understands what Jesus did for them and trusts God with their whole life.