

Transition:

From the glory of the mountain of transfiguration to the valley of the reality of hurt. Jesus makes it plain, you can't have fellowship with God and at the same time have something against your brother.

Tell the story:

Tell the story (with passion!) Do the best you can, don't stop and teach, try not to make points, just tell the story. Perhaps leave some parts out or make a mistake, just to see if your group catches it!

Rebuild the story:

Chronologically rebuild the story by asking questions. Have the group look for what was added or left out by looking in their Bibles and going back over the story. Then have someone else tell the story the best they can – just like you modeled the first time.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the first thing you should do when you realize you are offended?
2. Can you be right with God if you're not right with others? (Matt 5:23-24)
3. What are the four clear steps to deal with unrepentant sin within the church?

Fundamental:

Forgiveness - We are created for relationships with God and with others. Yet, sin breaks fellowship with God and with others. Sin creates debt in our relationships. The Bible says "the wages of sin is death." When someone hurts us, we feel "owed" an apology or something else. We try to "pay back" those who harm us. When we sin against others, we may feel the need to "make up" for damage we have caused. It is critical to know God's peace process - forgiveness, amends and reconciliation - if we are to experience God's peace. Each part of this process is distinct and necessary for living in God's will. Christians are called to be peacemakers like Christ.

Here are some common misunderstandings about forgiveness:

- Forgiveness is not excusing sin! God hates sin and He is the avenger. Sin is never okay.
 - Forgiveness is not freeing the guilty of a demand for justice. All sin must be punished or paid for.
 - Forgiveness is not denying your hurt or ignoring your anger. Forgiveness frees you to work through pain honestly. You should be hurt and angered by sin - God is!
 - Forgiveness is not a feeling and is not conditional.
 - Forgiveness is not forgetting.
 - Forgiveness is not trust. Forgiving the past does not mean someone is trustworthy for the future. Trust may be rebuilt, but sometimes it is best not to...
 - Forgiveness is not reconciliation. You can even forgive someone who is unwilling or unable to reconcile.
1. What are the consequences of choosing not to forgive someone? Spiritual consequences? Physical consequences?
 2. What are the results of choosing to forgive someone? Spiritually? Physically?

Homework/Challenge:

1. If you have unforgiveness towards someone, start by praying for them. Find time to make it right ASAP.
2. Please read Matthew 19 in preparation for next week.

Discipleship Tip:

Consider having the individuals in your small group call the people who have caused the offense and ask them to forgive them during small group.

Prayer:

Pray for the ones who have hurt you and ask God to bless them.