

## Small Group/Sermon Notes for High Ways Part 9: Forgiveness

Remember, small groups are primarily for growing closer relationships with other believers. We can learn wonderful things in this environment but keep relationships first.

- Make sure everyone knows each other's names. Have everyone share a little about themselves and how life is going right now.
- Key Scripture **Isaiah 55:6-9**
  - God's ways are higher than our ways x2:
    - First, God's ways can be hard to understand sometimes.
    - Second, God's ways are much much better than our ways.
- **This week: Forgiveness.**
- What are Jesus' thoughts on forgiveness?
  - **Matthew 6:14-15.**
  - **Matthew 18:21-35.**
- Very strong statements here. Why? Let's go a little deeper.
  - I see a loose progression of spiritual development in how we relate to people as Christians:
    - First, don't be evil. **Titus 3:3**
    - Second, be honest. (talked about this last week)
    - Third, be fair. There is no favoritism with God.
    - Submit to authority and in general. **Hebrews 13:17**
    - Include those beneath you. **Romans 12:16**
    - Show mercy. (Don't give them what they deserve.)
    - Have grace for people. (Give them what they don't deserve.) **Colossians 4:6**
    - Forgive when people sin against you and yours.
    - There is one more level that I see. We will talk about that later.
- If offering forgiveness is so far up the "spiritual development" scale, why is God so harsh on it?
  - Simple answer: Because without forgiveness God's plan simply doesn't work.
- Before we talk about this plan, let me say some important things about forgiveness:
  - Your forgiveness doesn't get people off the hook with God. **Romans 12:19**
  - Forgiveness doesn't always mean things go back to the way they were. **Number 14:19-23**
    - There are consequences. You can forgive someone but no longer trust them for example.
  - Forgiveness is meant to end the problem.
    - If someone in your life is using the idea of forgiveness to perpetuate the problem, then you aren't really forgiving – you are just being taken advantage of.
- So, if God's plan doesn't work without forgiveness, what is God's plan?
  - God's plan is to create an Eternal Kingdom. This is a community of intelligent, creative, free willed beings where there is no pain, no tears, and no evil...ever.
- God's "attempts" to create this Kingdom throughout history:
  - Just put them in heaven. (Satan rebelled.)
  - Make it really simple. (Adam and Eve.)
  - Kill all the bad guys. (Noah's flood.)
  - Pick the dream team. (Abraham.)
  - Just tell them what to do. (Moses.)
- Then comes Redemption. The synthesis of God's love and His justice. (Jesus)
  - This is one step above forgiveness, because the redeemer must pay the price.
  - You are not asked to redeem. Jesus has done that.
    - But you must forgive or living the redeemed life gets fouled up.
- Closing Scripture: **Titus 2:11-14.**
  - What do you need to be redeemed from? The blood of Christ is sufficient.
  - Who do you need to release to the Lord? Who do you need to forgive?
- Pray for each other before you finish up!