



INTRODUCTION

Creating a space where all are welcome to seek God is the focus of Prairie Lakes Church' mission. All of us have experienced hurt at one time in our lives, through bullying, abusive situations or someone being unkind to us; sometimes we are the ones doing the hurting. To be part of Prairie Lakes Church means we forgive ourselves, and we forgive one another to reach Iowa.

DISCUSSION

1. We know Jesus died on the cross and forgave our sins. However, this does not exempt us from forgiving others. How does **Colossians 3:1-14** describe what forgiving others looks like in our lives?
2. **Ephesians 4:31-32** mentions when we forgive we are not to feel bitterness, anger, ill will, etc. Discuss methods of working through these feelings when someone wrongs you so you can fully forgive.
3. In **Matthew 18:21-22**, Jesus tells us forgiving once is not enough; we must forgive each time we are wronged. This can be difficult when someone wrongs us over and over again. Discuss ways you can practice forgiveness while still maintaining boundaries when someone in your life wrongs you multiple times.
4. How can we pray for our enemies and those who have wronged us? How can we pray through the process of forgiving others?

DO SOMETHING

1. When we are filled with love, we demonstrate love. Demonstrate yours by volunteering at one of our partner organizations. For more information, go to prairielakeschurch.org, choose your campus at the top and click the "Local Partners" link on your campus page.
2. Practice the process of forgiveness this week by reading and praying through the following passages: **Mark 11:25**, **Luke 6:37** and **Luke 17:3-4**.
3. Get to know someone on a deeper level by having a conversation with them about forgiveness.

RESOURCES

1. "Forgiveness and Trust" by Henry Cloud
2. "Forgiveness Issues" sermon [September 14, 2014]
3. *Five Steps to Forgiveness: The Art and Science of Forgiving* by Everett Worthington

For more information, email discipleship@prairielakeschurch.org.

Forgiveness

Scriptures - Matthew 6:14-15 Matthew 18:20-23 Colossians 3:12-13

Definition - Forgiveness is a costly sacrifice. You willingly absorb the cost of what was done to you without bitterness, resentment or retaliation. Forgiveness is a decision and a process. Like grief, we need to continually work at it.

You have forgiven someone when you can:

- wish them well
- pray for them
- feel no bitterness toward them

If you don't forgive, your heart is not right with God. God calls us to forgive because we have been forgiven.

If you don't forgive:

- You don't understand or believe the Gospel.
- You want power and control.
- You are afraid to take the first step.
- You don't trust God will protect the outcome.

Forgiveness is not:

- Forgetting
- Denying
- Waiting for an apology
- Pain free
- A one-time event
- Trusting them again

Pathway of Forgiveness

1. Confess your hurt and anger to God. Accept your inability to change circumstances and confess you need God's help and want to forgive.
2. Pray and/or write down exactly what you need to forgive and who you need to forgive. Be as specific as possible.
3. Remind yourself of your own sin and guilt before God. Remind yourself of your own need of forgiveness before God and others. Jesus died for your sins and has shown you undeserved grace and mercy.
4. Pray a prayer of release. Release the anger, bitterness and unforgiveness. Ask God to help you forgive and be free from what you wrote down in step #2. Let go of the need to control or hold on to it.
5. Ask for support and accountability from those you love and trust. Invite 2-3 people you trust to pray for you and help you process.
6. Repeat steps 1-5 as many times as you need to.

Resources

Sermons

- Three Doors Series | prairielakes.org/forgive1
- Hoarders Series | prairielakes.org/forgive2
- Cleaning Up My Side of the Road Series | prairielakes.org/forgive3

Articles

- Worshiping with Those Who Hurt You | prairielakes.org/worshipping
- You Can Forgive Your Parents | prairielakes.org/parents
- What the Larry Nassar Case Can Teach Us About Guilt and Forgiveness | prairielakes.org/nassar

Books

- *Choosing Forgiveness* by Nancy Leigh DeMoss
- *The Gift of Forgiveness* by Charles Stanley
- *The Freedom of Forgiveness* by John MacArthur