

Module Six Group Process

The Gift of Forgiveness

Opening Prayer

Introduction

Perhaps the most joyful and challenging part of life is our relationships with ourselves and with each other. God is our source of all love, all forgiveness, and all mercy, and with these things in place, our relationships will be so much healthier and meaningful. Yet in our humanness we have resentments, unforgiveness, and judgment. Let's dive in and look at God's power in our relationships.

Activity #1 (Materials needed: a small bag of rocks and print out Grace process template)

Ask for a volunteer and have her open both hands. Then have the members each say something that frustrates them in their relationships. Continue going around the group as you do the following activity. As each member shares a sentence about something that frustrates or angers them, place a rock in the volunteer's hands. Continue around the group again and again, placing rocks for each comment made.

As the volunteer's hands fill up, ask how it feels. Acknowledge that it hurts and is heavy. Share with the group this is what it feels like to carry the weight of unforgiveness, resentments, and judgments.

Ask the group, "If your hands were so full of problems, would you be able to hold on to God and your loved ones, or receive any blessing?"

Now ask the group members if they are willing to give to God all the burdens, forgive the resentments, and release the judgment. With each thing the group members are willing to let go, have the volunteer put a rock back in the bag until all the rocks are gone.

Now ask, “With your hands empty, which feels better? Which way would enable you to love as God loves and receive his blessing? (Pass out worksheet on GRACE Process)

Activity #2: The GRACE Process of Forgiveness

Spend some time as a group or individually doing a written GRACE process for yourself or for someone you are angry with.

Scriptures

Read the following scriptures about forgiveness in our relationships. (Before the group meeting, you may wish to write each of these references on a separate piece of paper to pass out among the group members.)

“Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your father also who is in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.” (Mark 11:25, NRSV)

And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. (Ephesians 4: 32, NKJV)

Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. (Colossians 3:13, NKJV)

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” (Matthew 6:12)

And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.” (Luke 23:34, ESV)

Questions for Reflection

1. What insight did you gain from the rock activity?
2. After reading this lesson, what insights did you gain that would help you in your own relationships?
3. Who do you need to forgive? What do you need to forgive yourself for?
4. Think of a time when you forgave someone. What changed in you? What changed in your relationship? Did any blessings come from that?
5. Was there a scripture that stood out for you and how can you apply that to your life?
6. What impact has judgment had on your relationships?

Homework

Spend some quiet time with the Lord asking him to search your heart if there's anything that you need to forgive or anything you need to let go of. Then apply what you learned this week to your personal circumstance.