



“Let Go”

Matthew 6, John 8 Small Group Plan

Two natures beat within my breast.
One is cursed, and one is blessed.
One I love, and one I hate.
The one I feed will dominate.

-- Anonymous

OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

Matthew 6:9-13

⁹ This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today
our daily bread. ¹² **Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.** ¹³ And
lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

- When Jesus shifts his prayer template from our relationship to God to our relationship to others, why does he immediately focus on forgiveness?
- Do you think that most people today want to reconcile their grievances or collect more of them? Explain.
- Think through the following story of guilt and forgiveness.

LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— THE ACCUSED —

John 8:1-4

¹ But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ² At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. ³ The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group ⁴ and said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.

- Is there any question that this woman is guilty? How would she be thought of by most people in today's conservative church? Explain.
- Why are these religious leaders forcing her to “*stand before the group*”?
- What is the woman thinking and how is she feeling?
- Read the story prior to this one (7:45-52). How is it connected to this story?

— **THE ACCUSERS** —

John 8:5-6a

⁵ *In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?”* ⁶ *They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.*

- Explain the “trap” that the religious leaders are setting for Jesus.
- Are they concerned for the woman's well being? Explain.
- Think about the hearts of those who brought the woman to Jesus. Where will an unforgiving spirit lead?

— **THE ANSWER** —

John 8:6b-9

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. ⁷ *When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”* ⁸ *Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.* ⁹ *At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.*

- Why did Jesus bring such a clear pause to this unfolding drama by stooping and writing on the ground rather than quickly answering demands?
- Of course, no one knows, but what do you think he wrote on the ground?
- What were the implications and deeper meanings of his answer, the one without sin can throw the first stone?
- Why did everyone leave?

— THE FORGIVENESS —

John 8:10-11

¹⁰ Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” ¹¹ “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”

- According to his own stated standard, could Jesus have stoned the woman? Why did he not?
- How does this story illustrate this trio of definitions?

Justice is getting what we deserve.

Mercy is not getting what we deserve.

Grace is getting what we don't deserve.

- Why did he intentionally create a conversation with her? Why did she need to hear him say, “Neither do I condemn you?”
- What responsibility did Jesus attach to her forgiveness?

USE IT / APPLY IT ...

- In his book, *The Peacemaker*, Ken Sande mentions four promises that forgiving people make. They are promises made to themselves, to others, and to God:
 - ✓ I will not dwell on this incident.
 - ✓ I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you.
 - ✓ I will not talk to others about this incident.
 - ✓ I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.
- Do you think these promises are fair and reasonable? Explain.
- Which one would be the most difficult for you to keep? Explain.
- Close with a moment of silent prayer for each group member to remember how God has forgiven them, then praise Him for his mercy and grace.