

# Walking with God: Forgiveness

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## **Bible Study at a Glance:**

Forgiveness is not easy, yet we all know God asks us to do it. He expects us to forgive as he forgives us. Forgiveness can't be just an external thing, but it has to come from our hearts out of our union with Christ.

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(Explain to the Group) = You don't have to read this word for word, but this is the general idea of what to explain before moving on.

- **Q: These are questions to ask the whole group**
  - *A: Hopefully the group arrives at most of the answers on their own, but if they don't, redirect the discussion towards these answers, and be sure to tell the group the answers if no one quite got it.*

CCC/Verses and quotes to read out loud are in boxes.

***Colossians 3:13:** bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do.*

***Matthew 6:14-15:** If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.*

***Luke 6:37:** Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.*

***CCC 2842:** This "as" is not unique in Jesus' teaching: "You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect"; "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful"; "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another." It is impossible to keep the Lord's commandment by imitating the divine model from outside; there has to be a vital participation, coming from the depths of the heart, in the holiness and the mercy and the love of our God. Only the Spirit by whom we live can make "ours" the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. Then the unity of forgiveness becomes possible and we find ourselves "forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave" us.*

*CCC 2843: Thus the Lord's words on forgiveness, the love that loves to the end, become a living reality. The parable of the merciless servant, which crowns the Lord's teaching on ecclesial communion, ends with these words: "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." It is there, in fact, "in the depths of the heart," that everything is bound and loosed. It is not in our power not to feel or to forget an offense; but the heart that offers itself to the Holy Spirit turns injury into compassion and purifies the memory in transforming the hurt into intercession.*

- **Q: Does it seem like God's expectations are too hard?**
- **Q: The quotes from the Catechism are difficult to understand. What do you think is the key point they are trying to make? For example, what do you think they mean when they say "there has to be a vital participation, coming from the depths of the heart, in the holiness and the mercy and the love of our God"?**
- **Q: Have you had an experience where you felt God helped you forgive someone you didn't think you could forgive?**
- **Q: How do you forgive chronic sin, someone who keeps sinning against you over and over again?**

(Explain to the Group) Before asking this last question, let's think a bit about a couple of times that Jesus forgave:

- a. When he was dying on the cross, he asked God to forgive those putting him to death "for they know not what they do".
  - b. Shortly after he was arrested, Peter, Jesus' right hand man among the apostles, denied that he even knew Jesus, within earshot of Jesus. That's like a best friend abandoning you in your most dire time of need. Later, after Jesus rose from the dead, he made clear to Peter that he forgave him and that he would still be his apostle leading his Church.
- **Q: Is there someone in your life you need to forgive? This can be contemplated in silence.**