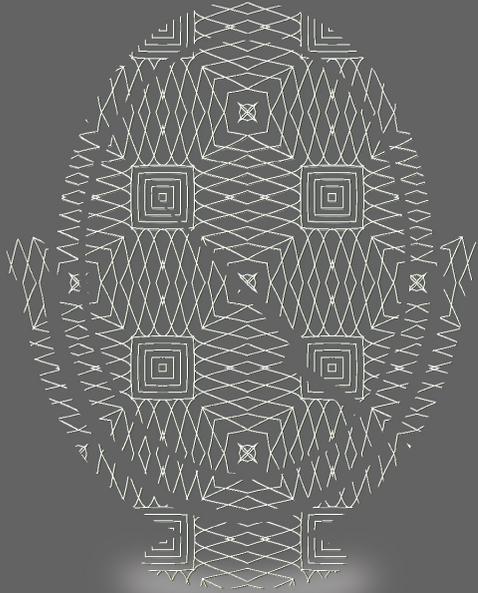


DIALOG

# *Beauty and the Broken*

7 STORIES OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME



*Facilitator's Guide*

## Facilitator's Guide

*Beauty and the Broken*  
7 STORIES OF PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME



BEACON HILL PRESS  
O F K A N S A S C I T Y

*Beauty and the Broken*

7 Stories of People Like You and Me

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## SESSION

1

# FORGIVENESS/ RECONCILIATION

Focus Scriptures: Matthew 18:21-35

**Session Goal:** To help group members understand forgiveness and our responsibility as Christians to forgive others.

## OPENING OUR MINDS

### *Option 1*

Begin by asking your group the following questions:

- *What is one action that might require a person to ask another for forgiveness?*
- *Is it easier to ask for forgiveness or to give forgiveness? Why?*
- *Why is forgiveness necessary?*

### *Option 2*

Read each of the following actions below. After each action, invite your group to silently rate, on a scale of 1 (very easy) to 5 (very difficult), how easy or difficult it would be for them to forgive each person.

- **Unfaithful spouse**
- **A lie told by your child**
- **Someone steps on your foot**
- **An unkind word spoken to you by a coworker**
- **A friend breaks a confidence**

### *Imaginative Option*

On a dry erase board write the words “Easy” and “Difficult” next to each other. Under the word “Easy,” ask your group to list those things they would consider easy to forgive. Then, under “Difficult,” ask your group to list those things that are not so easy to forgive. Follow up by asking people to silently reflect on each list.

## OPENING THE WORD

### *Understanding Matthew 18:21–35*

Peter poses a question to Jesus that was often a topic of debate among rabbis. It was held that a person was only required to forgive three times and that on the fourth time he/she could choose not to offer forgiveness. Rather than using three times, Peter asks about forgiving seven times. Jesus’ answer does not point to a final number (77 times), but is meant as way to show the unlimited boundaries of forgiveness. He illustrates this point by telling a parable.

Jesus tells the story of a king and a servant who owed the king a great debt. The king summons the servant and pronounces that he and his family are to go in to slavery until the debt is paid. At this, the servant begs the king for leniency and the king cancels the debt. The servant then goes out and finds a fellow servant who owed him a small debt. He proceeds to choke the man, demanding payment. The man begs, but the servant refuses. Servants looking on relay the scene to the king, who in turn calls for the servant whose debt he cancelled. The master then sentences him to be tortured until the debt is paid.

In the story the king represents God—who is forgiving, but also just. The truth: As God has forgiven our sin, we should forgive others.

### *Option 1*

Read Matthew 18:21-22. Share with the group that it was common thought among rabbis during Jesus' day that you were only required to forgive three times and could refuse on the fourth.

- **Why would Peter give a specific number when asking about how many times we should forgive someone?**
- **How could determining a specific number effect the way we think about forgiveness? How would this effect our willingness to forgive others?**
- **What does Jesus' answer tell us about forgiveness?**
- **Did Jesus mean we are to only forgive 77 times? If not, what did He mean?**

Read verses 23-27.

- **What observations do you make about the king?**
- **What observations do you make about the servant?**
- **Why do you think the king changed his course of action toward the servant?**

Read verses 28-31.

- **In light of the money owed him compared to what he had owed the king, why do you think the servant was not as generous as the king?**
- **How would you describe the servant's attitude and action toward the one who owed him a small debt?**

- **What thoughts and feelings would you have had if you were one of the servants who witnessed this scene? (v. 31)**

Read verses 32-34.

- **In what ways did the king's attitude and action change as a result of the servant's actions?**
- **Why was the king not as merciful with the servant as he had been before?**

Read verse 35.

- **How would you summarize the message of this parable?**

### *Option 2*

Divide your group in to pairs. Invite each pair to read Matthew 18:21-35 and discuss the following questions:

- **What observations do you make about the king?**
- **What observations do you make about the servant?**
- **What is the overall message, or messages, of this story?**

Then, after sufficient time, bring everyone together. Ask each pair to share their discussion. Follow up by asking:

- **Who does the king represent?**
- **Who does the unforgiving servant represent?**
- **Who does the servant who owed the unforgiving servant represent?**
- **How is this story a depiction of the kingdom of God?**

## OPENING OUR HEARTS

### *Option 1*

Forgiveness is not always easy, but something that we are to do as Christ-followers. Just as God has forgiven us, we are to forgive others. Forgiveness is the first step toward reconciliation with the one who has wronged us. Invite your group to think about a hurt, or hurts, in their life. Then, have them silently reflect on the following questions:

- **Is there someone I need to forgive?**
- **How can the process of forgiveness and reconciliation be initiated?**
- **In what ways do I need God to intervene and help me in the forgiving and reconciling with another?**

Close in prayer.

### *Imaginative Option*

Divide everyone in to groups of three. Give each group a piece of paper and pen/pencil. Ask each group to read Matthew 18:21-35 and then rewrite the story using a modern day situation. After sufficient time, bring the groups together. Invite each group to share their story.

### *Option 2*

Just as God has forgiven us, we are to forgive others. Forgiveness means that we rid ourselves of resentment, anger, bitterness, and so on toward another who has wronged us. Forgiving another does not always lead to immediate reconciliation. We should keep in mind that forgiving does not mean that we condone or excuse the wrongdoing of another, or deny the fact that this person has hurt us. In fact, you may forgive someone but still may have to take steps to ensure that you are not hurt again. Also, forgiving does not mean that justice is abolished or negated.

Forgiveness can and does lead to reconciliation--forgiveness in action. A mended relationship often takes time and effort. In some cases reconciliation may not be possible due to people and circumstances; however, we should do our part to restore a broken relationship.

Invite your group to silently reflect on the following questions:

- **Is there someone who has asked for your forgiveness, but you have not forgiven this person?**
- **Is there someone you need to ask to forgive you?**
- **Is there a broken relationship that needs to be restored?**

Close in prayer, asking God's help in forgiving others as He has forgiven us.

## *Connect* -----

### WEEK 1

#### *Forgiveness/Reconciliation*

THIS WEEK: We will examine what Jesus said about forgiveness using a parable about a king and his servant who owed him a great debt (Mathew 18:21-35).

THINK ABOUT THIS: Take time this week to think about what it truly means to be forgiven and what it means to forgive someone else.

PRAYER CONCERNS:

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*Session 1: Forgiveness and Reconciliation*

*Session 2: Repentance and Confession*

*Session 3: Sanctification*

*Session 4: Suffering, Sorrow, and Pain*

*Session 5: Body of Christ*

*Session 6: Social Holiness*

*Session 7: Overcoming Your Past*

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