

Lesson 1: Forgiving and Accepting Yourself

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: (Help people discover these points – if the principles are not emerging in group discussion, ask questions to bring these out – do not “lecture” to them.)

- Freely justified by his grace. Forgiven by Christ. Imitate Christ. Receive His forgiveness and acceptance. Forgive and accept yourself. Give Him all of your guilt and shame.

- 1) **Pray.** Open with prayer; include foundational **Opening Prayer** concepts. Spend time in small group prayer as appropriate during the session.
- 2) **Review** the Basic Principles, 5 R’s + 2, and accompanying gestures and **discuss** how understanding and applying these is going.

Basic Principles

- **Claim your heritage** – Reclaim it if you’ve been robbed. 1 Peter 1:3-9
- **Come to Jesus** – Bring Him your stuck places. Ps 62:5-8
- **3-way prayer** – The facilitator does most of the verbal prayer. The person being prayed for focuses on listening to God and responding. Others intercede quietly. Matt 18:18-20
- **Hearing God** – God speaks directly to the person being prayed for at their point of need. Spend time silently listening for His voice. John 10:27
- **Test and give thanks** – Give thanks frequently during the prayer time. Test that all the person hears is consistent with Scripture. 1 Thess 5:16-21
- **Follow Jesus** above all. Let Him lead the process. John 8:12, 31-32
- **Confidentiality** – Share only your own story, not someone else’s. Rom 1:28-32, Prov 20:19

5 R’s + 2

- **Opening Prayer** – Ask God to lead and protect. Bind evil in Jesus’ name. Matt 18:18-20, Ps 143:10, Prov 18:10
- **Recognize** – Identify (take captive) your negative feelings, thoughts, and actions. 2 Cor 10:3-5
- **Recent** – Bring these to God and ask Him to reveal a related recent memory.
- **Root** – Ask God to reveal any root(s) – the first time (or pattern) when you thought, felt, and/or acted this way. Matt 12:33
- **Receive** – Receive His perspective - first at the root, if there is one. Test by God’s word. Matt 7:7-11
- **Renew** – Apply this perspective in everyday life. 1 John 1:5-7
- **Closing Prayer** – Thank God and ask for help to apply His truth. Send away evil in Jesus’ name. Luke 17:11-19, John 8:31, Luke 10:17-19

3) Review

- a. Psalm 34:5 (those who look to Him are radiant – no shame), Romans 8:1-2 (no condemnation), Ephesians 1:4-8 (chosen to be holy and blameless in His sight, redeemed, lavished with grace), Ephesians 2:8-9 (saved by grace, not works), Ephesians 4:32 (forgive others as God forgave you), Romans 15:7 (accept one another as Christ accepted you) and Ephesians 5:1-2 (imitate God as dearly loved children)
- b. The last lesson studied.

➤ Large group

- Review the **top 3 principles** from the review verses, and from the last lesson studied.
- Write these principles (in words or pictures) on a whiteboard or flipchart.
- Together practice the gestures or hand motions for these lessons.

- 4) **Discovery Bible Study (DBS): Romans 3:21-30 (freely justified by his grace), Colossians 2:13-15 (forgiven by Christ) and 1 Corinthians 11:1 (imitate me as I imitate Christ).**

Ask 2-3 people to read the verses out loud, from varying translations when possible. Alternatively, listen to the verses being read aloud on an audio device 2-3 times. Then ask someone to retell the passage, as completely as possible, in their own words. Ask the group to contribute anything missed. Fill in gaps as needed.

Pray as a group and ask God to speak through His word. Spend time listening silently. Then discuss the following questions. Help everyone participate. If you have more than 6-7 people, first split into small groups.

- What do these passages teach us about God?
- What do these passages teach us about followers of Jesus?
- What do these passages teach us about unhealthy guilt and shame?
- How can we imitate Christ's forgiveness and acceptance of us?
- How are you already applying/experiencing the principles in this passage? How would you like to grow in applying/experiencing these principles? (Encourage people to consider possible applications, then choose one or two clear, specific and realistic personal applications.)
- What does God want you to do to apply this? Who will you tell?
- Who will you share this lesson with?
- What key principles will your group share with the large group?

5) Follow-up Activities.

- **Share** key principles, drawings and motions with the large group. Ask each small group to share one key principle. Write these (in words or pictures) on a large paper or whiteboard. Continue until you have all the main points in the lesson.
- **Gesture:** Decide together on a gesture or hand motion for this lesson. Then ask all participants to stand up and do the gesture together. Then practice together all the gestures in order for the 5 R's +2, basic principles, and all the lessons covered so far in this module.
- **Individually**, ask God to reveal to you any ways in which you struggle to receive God's forgiveness and acceptance, forgive and accept yourself, or give God all your guilt and shame.
- **In small groups**, use Wholeness Prayer principles to pray for one another regarding any ways the person being prayed for struggles with receiving God's forgiveness and acceptance, forgiving or accepting themselves, or giving God all of their guilt and shame.
- **Clarify** the next meeting time and any pre-work to be completed beforehand.
- **Pre-work** for next lesson:
 - **Memorize:** 1 Corinthians 11:1 (And review previous verses.)
 - **Pray:** Read and meditate on [DBS verses in Lesson 1 of the next module being studied].
 - **Share:** Share with others what you are learning and pray for them.
 - **Practice:** Ask God to remind you of any ways in which you struggle to receive God's forgiveness and acceptance, forgive or accept yourself, or give God all of your guilt and shame. As these are revealed, ask someone to help you pray through these issues using Wholeness Prayer principles.
 - **Resources** for this module: "Wholeness Prayer – Simplified Version Fourth Edition" and "Facilitating a Time of Wholeness Prayer"

6) Pray for one another. At the end, pray a **closing prayer**, including key foundational concepts. Commit to pray for one another between training times.

Note: You may also want to incorporate a time of sharing and prayer – for blessings and challenges.