



Untangling Forgiveness in a Community of *Kindness*

Cultivate Book Study

Week 5 Study Guide: Chapters 10 & 11
Becca Boganwright – Trusting God Even When...

We've taken a close look at both receiving forgiveness for ourselves and giving it away to others. But what about when the one we're trying to forgive is God?

Read this week's chapters, then watch our teaching video. Use this study guide – either in a group or on your own – to reflect, respond and pray as you cultivate forgiveness into your life. Your goal is not to get through the content, but to get the content through you! Be REAL, invite God to speak into your life and respond to Him as you study.

Reading Reflection

How were you instructed, encouraged or challenged by this week's reading? Reflect on a word, statement or idea that got your attention. How can you cultivate that truth into your life?

Quick Study

If time only allows for quick study this week, linger here: God is not intimidated by our questions. However, our questions often arise because we believe we know "how, what, when" God should be doing something and so we don't understand "why" He doesn't. What would it take for you to surrender your need to understand, at least for now, and instead trust that God sees and knows far more than you can even imagine?

Video Notes

Fill in the blanks following the on-screen prompts:

1. God is not intimidated by your _____.
2. As _____ as we think we are, we can't see the whole _____.
3. Surrender your need to _____.
4. You are surrendering to a _____ God.
5. To know _____ is to know the _____.
6. Healing can _____ even if your hurt _____.
7. We can choose to _____ the suffering Savior.

Key Verses

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:8-9 NIV

"He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief." Isaiah 53:3 NLT

"This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most." Hebrews 4:15-16 NLT

Reflect & Discuss

1. Reflect on a time you either accepted or asked for forgiveness but didn't really let "it" go. Given what you've learned through this study, is there anything you'd do differently? How does that reflect growth in your understanding of self, God or others?
2. Lysa TerKeurst says "if God isn't giving His provision to us in the way we expect right now, then we must trust there's something God knows that we don't know." [p. 163]
 - a. Fill in the blank. I want to trust God even when _____.
 - b. What is one thing you've learned through our study that gives you greater confidence in God?
3. Read Isaiah 53:3. Grief, sorrow and suffering are a part of life. While that does not minimize our pain, it does help us to become more intimately acquainted with what Jesus endured for us. How does that perspective change the way you see your own difficulties? How does it help you understand Jesus more?
4. Looking back at what God has done helps us to trust what He will do. Even if you can't yet see the whole picture, perhaps you're beginning to see the pieces come together. How have you experienced God use a struggle or hardship in your life to weave together a greater plan?

Cultivate Forgiveness

God can handle our questions. In fact, authenticity with God is what separates relationship from religion. We can't know God personally if we're unwilling to share the deepest parts of us. But God...also wants us to trust Him beyond what we see, feel or even understand. He wants us to practice real faith.

— [What makes faith fall apart isn't doubt. It's becoming too certain of the wrong things." Lysa TerKeurst

Be REAL with self. Is there anywhere in your life where you've begun to walk by sight rather than by faith? Have you become too certain of the wrong things, trusting your emotions and ideas over God's truth? This might be "feelings of disillusionment" you've turned into facts [LT p. 145]. It could be a lie you're believing, a secret you're keeping or a line of faulty thinking about yourself, God or others.

Will you be REAL with God and confess that right now?

Hebrews 4:15-16 reminds us that Jesus knows our weaknesses. He understands us and He offers us mercy and grace. He knows our innermost thoughts and He loves us. That promise should lead us to conclude as a matter of fact, not feeling, that God is faithful. *He doesn't need to be forgiven; He needs to be trusted.* You can surrender your doubts, confusion and hurt to a safe God. **Are you willing to trust God – by faith – today?**

— [“Even when what we see in front of us feels confusing. Even when what we see in front of us isn't at all what we thought it would look like. Even when we don't agree that this is good. We don't have to understand God to trust Him.” Lysa TerKeurst

Trusting God is a choice we make every day. It's vital to our faith and it's crucial to our healing *even when* our hurt endures. Get alone with God. With humility and sincerity ask Him to meet you today...

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time, enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as a pathway to peace; taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that You will make all things right if I surrender to Your will; so that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with You forever in the next. Amen.

Dig Deeper

Choose any of these dig deeper opportunities to cultivate more of God's word into your life.

- Read James 1:2-6. What does the testing of our faith grow in us? When that characteristic is fully developed, what will we need? And yet, what does God say we can ask Him for at any time? What posture should we take when we ask? Why do you think that is?
- Read Romans 5:3-5. Our suffering while not easy, eventually cultivates hope. What else do we gain along the way? Even if you can't see it yet, how does that promise of eventual hope encourage you?
- Read Mark 14:36. How does the way Jesus acknowledges His suffering, yet submits to the Father's will, challenge you in the way you approach God?