



Untangling Forgiveness in a Community of *Kindness*

Cultivate Book Study

Week 6 Study Guide: Chapters 12, 13 & 14
Christina Crowley – Living Out Forgiveness

You did it! This was no fluffy study and so, if you've reached the end, take this moment to celebrate. You may not be where you want to be, but you are not where you were. That's growth and growth takes courage. In our final week of study, we look at walking in the ways of Christ SO THAT we walk forward as women who live out forgiveness. 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: Being a lover of Jesus is directly connected to becoming a learner of who He is. What is one thing you've learned about who God is and his heart for you? This could be something about His character or a way He wants to grow, transform or challenge you.

Video Notes

Fill in the blanks following the on-screen prompts:

1. If we simply love the _____ of Jesus more than the _____ of Jesus, our relationship with him will be _____ and our impact on others will be _____.
2. As our _____ for the ways of Christ grows, our willingness to _____ out forgiveness will follow.
3. Jesus has an _____ perspective that can heal the most _____ past.
4. Our love for the ways of Christ grows when: we remain grounded in _____.
5. To be extenders of forgiveness, we need to remember _____ we have been and _____ we have been rescued from.
6. Our relationship with Jesus will be lacking if we're only after what we _____ and abdicate what we're called to _____.
7. Our love for the ways of Christ grows when: we _____ extend forgiveness, which leads to God's _____.

Key Verses

Read Luke 7:36-50 – Jesus' Anointing by a Sinful Woman

"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you." John 14:26 ESV

"Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect." Romans 12:2 NLT

"Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back." Luke 6:38

Reflect & Discuss

1. Christina challenged us that if we only love the works of Jesus [e.g., gifts, blessings, provision] and forget to follow the ways of Jesus [e.g., loving our enemies, working at peace with others, continuously forgiving] our relationship with Him will be lacking.
 - a. As you consider Jesus' works, which do you most love and appreciate? Why?
 - b. As you consider Jesus' ways, which do you find most difficult to live out? Why?
 - c. How do Jesus' works encourage you to follow His ways?
2. Read Luke 7:36-50. Imagine the scene, the scent, the tension in the air. If you had to choose a "side", would you find yourself kneeling at the feet of Jesus with the woman or standing frustrated with the Pharisee? What is Jesus saying to you through this story?
3. Lysa TerKeurst says that "forgiveness is always healing in the right direction." When we know better, we do better. Progress is always growth in the right direction. How have you experienced growth over the past 6 weeks with self, God and others?

Cultivate Forgiveness

To authentically extend forgiveness, we need to remember where we've been and what Jesus has rescued us from. That remembrance not only causes us to grow in love for the ways of Christ, but it grounds us in gratitude.

Reflect on your perspective on forgiveness – where you started and where you are now. Respond to God with gratitude for the way you've been forgiven or for what you've learned about yourself, God or others.

Romans 12:2 challenges us not to imitate the world but to imitate God. This is a lifelong process. When we consistently check our heart and actively align it with Gods, we invite Him to work both in us and through us. Reflect on that person, situation or circumstance you wanted to forgive when we began this study. Is there any work that still needs to be done – either in you or through you – so that you can align your heart with Gods?

Your courage and effort to cultivate forgiveness into your life will never be in vain. On this side of heaven, you will inevitably have the opportunity to forgive again. But when we continuously choose forgiveness, we not only point others to Jesus, but we receive a beautiful blessing...a life marked by God's peace.

"Peace is the evidence of a life of forgiveness...it's having a deep down knowing that you've released yourself from the binding effects of the constricting force of unforgiveness and the constraining feeling of unfairness. You've traded all that drama for an upgrade. Peace." Lysa TerKeurst

Invite God to show you any constricting or constraining feelings – any drama – that is keeping you from knowing His peace. Then, pour that out at His feet. Walk forward knowing that God's peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit's presence in your life (Galatians 5:22-23). Pray, asking God to help you grow in love for the ways of Jesus SO THAT you can cultivate forgiveness into your life and experience God's promised peace.

Dig Deeper

If bitterness remains a struggle for you, consider this opportunity to dig deeper.

In Chapter 12, Lysa challenges us that "bitterness wears the disguises of other chaotic emotions that are harder to attribute to the original source of hurt." Refer to pg. 175-176 of our text and the list of ways bitterness can play out in our lives. Do you see any of these indicators in the way you're speaking, thinking or acting?

Read Romans 8:1. Christina reminded us that conviction from God isn't condemnation – it's an invitation to draw closer SO THAT He can reveal something to us. As you consider that list, how is the Holy Spirit convicting you? Is there anything on the list you didn't realize could be rooted in bitterness?

Pray and ask God to soften your heart. Begin the work of surrendering bitterness SO THAT you can truly pursue wholeness and healing.

A Closing Note

Thank you for joining us this season. You invested in the work of cultivating forgiveness and we pray that God multiplies that investment in your life over and over again as Jesus changes you from the inside out. Today and always, we are with you, we are for you and we love you! ♥