



Week 6: December 8-14

10min

Welcome / Introduce Guests
Celebrate! / Open in Prayer / Recall the Guidelines

2min

Share the Vision: *We want our small group to be less like a weekly gathering and more like a team.*

5min

Hook Question: What is one of the hardest things you have ever had to ask someone to forgive you for?

2min

Retell Last Week's Story: Acts 5:1-11 (Ananias and Saphira)

5min

Ask someone from your team to read or tell the following background for the story:

Today's story is a parable that Jesus told His disciples. Parables are a very unique type of story in the Scriptures. Parables use real-life examples to paint a picture of spiritual realities. By nature, it is hard for us to grasp spiritual concepts. We are spiritual beings, but we live in a physical world. We need examples we can comprehend to help us understand how spiritual things work. That is where parables come in to play. Parables use physical examples to help us relate to spiritual realities.

Something you need to know about parables is that they are not meant to be in-depth analogies. Not every part of a parable is meant to be compared to a spiritual reality. Interpreting parables this way is dangerous. Instead, parables are intended to make one big point. Like a good joke, parables only have one powerful punchline. The punchline for today's parable is simple: People who are truly forgiven by God will forgive others limitlessly.

This parable is all about forgiveness. Forgiveness means sending away my ill will towards someone who has sinned against me and caused me pain. It means changing my will to desire God's best for their life. Jesus crafted the parable we are about to hear very carefully to help us appreciate God's forgiveness and to motivate us to forgive others. Jesus knew we had to understand the gravity of our sin before God if we were ever going to appreciate His forgiveness toward us and be motivated to show that same type of forgiveness toward others.

One thing you need to know to understand this parable is the currency used in this parable. 10,000 talents was a massive amount of money: about 164,383 years of work for a common laborer of the day. This amount would translate somewhere in the range of tens of millions to over a billion US dollars today. On the other hand, 100 denarii was equivalent to about a quarter of a year's income. A denarius was a day's common wage, so 100 denarii was no small amount, but it was nothing compared to 10,000 talents (about a 600,000:1 ratio). With this information in mind it is time for our story to begin...

12min

Tell the story from Matthew 18:21-35: *Remember to change up the storyteller often.*

Rebuild the story: *Group members retell the story based on what they remember.*

Read the story from Matthew 18:21-35: *Ask the group to read these verses.*

Discussion Questions: learn to talk about God's Word with others...

Head Questions: Quicker tempo.

- What do you like or dislike about this story? What stands out to you the most?
- What does this story teach us about people?
- What does this story teach us about God?

Heart & Hand Questions: Slow down & wait!

- What do you think God is trying to show you through this story and our discussion?
- Who could retell the story for us right here one last time?

***Thank your storyteller for sharing the Word. Ask for a volunteer storyteller for next week. Close
In prayer.***



Week 6: More Than A Small Group

“But encourage one another every day, while it is called today, so that not one of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” Hebrews 3:13

Sin is painful. Always. Every time. Sin causes us pain. It causes others pain. The wages of sin is death. Sin welcomes death into our lives: our families, our friendships, our thinking, our finances, our... everything.

When we are at small group together, one of the things that happens frequently is the confession of sin and failures. (Important Note: If that isn't happening in your small group then you need to seek out the help of your coach to create a relational environment so that real-life discipleship can happen!)

Recently, we told the story of Ananias and Saphira in small group. For our discussion, we broke the group up into guys and girls. The men in my small group became very transparent about sins and struggles they were facing in their lives. As I listened to these men share, I was filled with compassion and concern. It was clear to me that they were struggling deeply. What was even more clear to me was that I could not give them what they needed in an hour and a half small group meeting once a week. These guys didn't just need a good Bible study, these men needed real-life relationships and ongoing discipleship. They need real-life relationships with Jesus, with me, and with each other.

People in your group are suffering because of sin. They are suffering loss. They are suffering through grief. They are suffering because someone sinned against them. They are suffering because of the pain they are causing others and themselves through their own sin. Sin is so deceitful. It hardens our hearts. It invites pain. It makes us feel content when we should be desperate for God. The only answer to countering sin is to walk in right relationship with God and others. We need God and others to encourage us every day so that our hearts will not become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

This can't happen in a once a week meeting. Your group must become less like a weekly gathering and more like a team of disciple-makers. This culture change starts with you. Who do you need to meet with this week? How do you need to encourage the people in your small group daily? Set the example. Aim at real-life relationships. As you do, God will use you to lead others to do the same. That's called making disciples who make disciples. Be a culture changer in your small group. Discipleship is a team sport.