
RENOVATE

TO MAKE NEW



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FLOW OF A RENOVATE SESSION

SOCIALIZE (10 MINUTES)

Spend a few minutes getting to know one another and catching up.

DISCUSS (10 MINUTES – OPTIONAL)

Talk about the homework completed the previous week:

Was anything helpful to you? If so, what?

What was more challenging than you expected?

WATCH (15 MINUTES)

The video session enhances the materials in the workbook by providing additional content on the topic.

DISCUSS (45 MINUTES)

The Discussion Questions provided in each session help participants explore the topic in conversation with one another. The questions are designed to allow people the freedom to reveal tensions or struggles with the topic, make personal discoveries, or think more about the subject.

REVIEW THE HOMEWORK (5 MINUTES)

The *Renovate* experience is different for each person. Some people may choose to skip certain exercises, while others will choose to complete all of them. Assure participants that they have the freedom to do as much or as little of the homework as they desire.

PRAY (5 MINUTES)

Sharing prayer requests and praying for one another is an important part of the experience. It is also okay for a participant not to share anything. Pressure should never be applied to disclose prayer requests.

7

Take Out the Trash

SESSION 7: TAKE OUT THE TRASH

We're all familiar with the word "forgiveness." We first hear it when we're small children, and we are regularly reminded of it until we reach old age. Few people really understand what it means. We like forgiveness when we receive it from others or when we associate it with Jesus' death on the cross. Alternatively, when we are the ones forgiving, it makes us uncomfortable... maybe even depressed, resentful, or nauseated. Refusing to forgive can even affect our physical health because God didn't create our bodies as harbors of grievance and resentment. Forgiveness is just as much for us as it is for the people we forgive. In fact, it is *more* for us than for them.

Opportunities to forgive tend to be coupled with intense emotions. Someone has wronged us. Anger, hurt, or bitterness can deceive us into thinking that forgiveness isn't possible until our emotions have healed. The truth is that the ability to forgive isn't dependent on the state of our emotions.

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS AND ISN'T

Forgiveness is not ...

Forgiveness ≠ A feeling or emotion

Forgiveness ≠ Excusing the other person's behavior

Forgiveness ≠ Forgetting

Forgiveness ≠ Reconciliation

Forgiveness is ...

Forgiveness is a choice you make, through faith in God, to give up the right to hold another person accountable for the wrong done to you. That doesn't mean you won't grieve what you've lost as a result of the wrong. Grieving is important. Healing continues beyond the moment you choose to forgive.

CONCLUSION

When we think about forgiveness, we tend to focus on our relationships with other people. When we do so, forgiveness may not seem worth the effort because those relationships often can't be restored even when we forgive. But forgiveness has a greater purpose: the restoration of our relationship with Christ. A lack of forgiveness can be one of the biggest hindrances to living fully free in Christ. When we refuse to forgive, it becomes toxic to us, changes our behavior, and causes us to hold Jesus at arm's length.

VIDEO NOTES

SESSION 7 COMMUNICATOR: ELAINE SCOTT

Elaine is the Director of Women’s Groups at Browns Bridge Church. In her role, she provides pastoral and strategic leadership to the women’s community. She is also a member of the Leadership Team at Browns Bridge, a group entrusted with providing vision and direction for the church. She is married and has two children.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Talk about a time when someone forgave you for something you'd done, large or small. What did that person's forgiveness do for you? What do you think it did for him or her?

2. Read Matthew 5:44. Is the idea of loving your enemies and praying for those who persecute you challenging for you? Why or why not?

But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.
(Matthew 5:44)

3. In the video, Elaine defines "forgiveness" as "a choice you make, through faith in God, to give up the right to hold another person accountable for the wrong done to you." Do you agree with that definition? Why or why not?



4. Do you think it's possible to forgive someone who continues to do things that hurt you? Why or why not?

5. Is there someone in your life or from your past that you need to forgive? What can you do to take a step toward forgiveness? How can this group support you?

PRIMER:

THE HOMEWORK FOR THIS WEEK

- Read Session 8, pp. 82–83. (5 minutes)

SECOND COAT:

IF YOU WANT MORE

- Complete the *Forgiveness Exercise*, pp. 77–79. (30 minutes)

FORGIVENESS EXERCISE

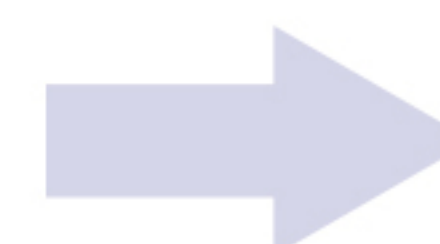
This exercise will take some time, and it may stir up weighty emotions. Take your time and know that this work will have a lasting impact on your physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

If you would like to revisit this exercise in the future, additional copies are located in the Appendix.

1. Take some time to pray, asking God to reveal to you if anyone has offended you or hurt you. As people come to mind, write their names below.

2. Beside the name(s) you listed, write the offense or hurt you experienced.

3. Write down something you believe about yourself as a result of the hurt you experienced (e.g., my value is dependent on how well I perform).



4. Determine what you lost from the offense you experienced (e.g., a happy childhood, my time).

Note: This is a hard step in this process. Acknowledging the cost is often one of the most painful parts of the forgiveness journey.

5. Take time to acknowledge the pain each person caused you. Give yourself permission to feel hurt, angry, or sad. Forgiveness is a choice of the will, and you will still grieve. Grieving is important. There is healing that will continue beyond the choice of forgiveness.

6. To forgive, declare that they owe you nothing further, releasing the right to see them change, and accepting them as they are. It is okay to ask God for help with this process. We often can't forgive people through our own efforts and need God to help us truly forgive those that have hurt us. If it helps you, write out your forgiveness declaration in the space provided.

7. When you are finished with the exercise, tear up or burn your list. This represents how you're choosing not to hold people accountable for what they owe you.

No one deserves forgiveness. But God chose to forgive us, and forgiveness is something we can offer, even when people don't deserve it. By identifying specifically how someone has hurt us, we can pinpoint exactly what we are forgiving. Forgiveness is the door we must walk through in order to experience true peace and freedom.