

Passing the Pardon Test

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Review

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Key Scriptures: Genesis 50:15–21; Matthew 6:12; 1 Peter 3:12

Discuss

1. How do you think Joseph felt the first time he saw his brothers in Egypt years after they sold him into slavery?
2. How might the word “release” connect to forgiveness?
3. How is holding on to unforgiveness like drinking poison and hoping the other person gets sick?
4. Why is it important for us to forgive and fully release someone even if they don’t apologize or admit they were wrong?
5. What are some signs that show we may not have fully forgiven someone?
6. Why is it important to first receive God’s complete forgiveness? How does understanding the depth of God’s forgiveness help us forgive one another?
7. Why do you think Satan uses unforgiveness as a tool against people? How does being aware of this help us live in freedom?
8. How might unforgiveness hinder our purposes?
9. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this message?

Takeaway

As we conclude, remember the following:

- Release offenses.
- Receive God’s forgiveness.
- Believe in God.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we want to commit our hearts to You. Help us pass the pardon test. We believe that through Jesus Christ, we are justified and made right with You. Help us receive

Your forgiveness for our sins and not live in shame. Empower us by the Holy Spirit to choose to forgive those who have hurt or offended us, no matter how we feel. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Leader Tip

Continuing to grow as a leader is one way you intentionally steward this gift and opportunity God has given you. Regularly meet with a mentor and read books on leadership and spiritual growth. Books like *He Still Speaks* by Wayne Drain and Tom Lane and *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team* by Patrick Lencioni would be a great starting place!

Group Dynamics Idea

Read Galatians 6:9–10. As you get to know people in your group, discover if there are any practical needs your group could help them with. Some examples could include: a meal train for a family with a new baby or someone facing an illness or surgery, help with moves, a Christmas-present drive for families in need, or helping single parents get some rest through childcare. You might even brainstorm as a group about how you can serve each other.