

GROWTH GROUPS

January 13, 2012

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy” (Matthew 5:7)

The parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:21-35)

Conversation Starter -

Share a time when someone was merciful to you; that is, they did not repay you as you deserved. What was memorable about that gesture? How did it make you feel?

Understanding -

Mercy is one of the most important attributes defining a follower of Christ. It is an attribute that reveals whether we have truly understood God’s love and forgiveness towards us. The parable suggests, if we are not willing to be merciful than we have not truly understood the mercy that has been shown to us.

1. In the parable, the king represents God. Just as the servant owes the king an immeasurably large debt, so too do we owe God a great debt. What is this debt? Do you recognize sin as a great debt, or something more akin to a simple mistake? What influences your thinking? *(Romans 7:21-25; Romans 6:23; Isaiah 53:1-6 might help bring understanding)*
2. What prevents us from being merciful even when we intellectually understand what God has done for us?
3. How does being merciful free us to live the joyful life God desires for us? *(How do you think the servant in the parable was experiencing life when he would not forgive the debt?)*
4. Extending mercy is not always “cut and dry.” It does not necessarily mean, for example, that a Christian business owner must always forgive a customer’s debt. Spend some time bringing up hypothetical or real scenarios in your lives when you might be called to respond mercifully. Discuss what it might look like to respond faithfully.

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