

WARM-UP

- Recall a memorable moment with your friends. Share it with us.
- Who are the friends you know with whom you can have difficult conversations? Why are you comfortable with them?
- Have you argued with your close friends? If so, do you still consider them your close friends? Why or why not?

WORD ³*“Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, ⁴and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive him.” ⁵The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!”* **LUKE 17:3-5**

(Read also **LUKE 17:1-2, 6.**)

Discipleship is meant to be a shared journey with others. God sets us apart in a community, but relationships are messy. Different backgrounds, personalities, and preferences make it hard for us to walk with others even in our journey of following Jesus. It seems to be easier to just walk this life alone, but God did not design us that way. We need each other to survive and thrive in life and in our calling. So, how are we to live as a community? As the disciples followed Jesus, their differences and the many obstacles they faced proved to be a challenge. Today, let's look at one of the lessons Jesus taught them about how they were to walk with one another.

1 | In our relationships, we have a responsibility to look out for one another.

"Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him . . ."

LUKE 17:3

As we follow Jesus, we will still struggle with sin and life's challenges, and the people we walk with will, too. Because we value one another, we must not let each other fall into sin or in the wrong direction. Jesus urged His disciples to *pay attention* to each other—to take care of one another and to look out for one another in love. We are encouraged to call out each other to stop sin in its tracks. As a community set apart by God, this is our duty and commitment. This also means that we are not to become a stumbling block to each other. What does Jesus say in Luke 17:1–2 about this?

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2 | In our relationships, we have a responsibility to rebuke those who sin.

"Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him . . ."

LUKE 17:3

When sin happens, it is our heart for those in our community to be restored to the Lord. This is where correction or rebuke comes in. We do this not because we want to feel highly or more righteous than those in our spiritual community, but because we want to lead them back to Jesus. Jesus urged His disciples to rebuke the brother who sins and to forgive him when he repents. As a loving, set apart community, we ought

to be able to openly correct one another if we sin and to speak forgiveness, extending God's grace to each other. The goal is to restore the person to Christ, not to condemn. How have you experienced this in your community?

3

In our relationships, we have a responsibility to forgive those who sin against us.

“. . . and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." **LUKE 17:4**

Hearing Jesus' words must have confused and frustrated the disciples. "Why should I forgive someone who wronged me? For seven times in fact!" one must have thought. Walking with others will be hard, which is why love and forgiveness are necessary, even when we have to do it again and again and again. As a community set apart by God, He has called us together for His purpose. This means those He has placed around us aren't optional but are God-given relationships. If we are to grow in our community, we should prioritize restoring one another, forgiving each other, letting go of our hurts and pains, humbly receiving correction, and pursuing reconciliation as necessary. What does Colossians 3:13 teach us about how we are to forgive?

APPLICATION

- Who do you allow to speak into your life? What are some proactive ways you can look out for each other in your community?
- Whose lives do you lovingly speak into? In what ways can you grow your faith as you invest in your godly relationships?
- This week, humbly seek forgiveness from someone you may have offended or wronged. What steps can you take as you seek the restoration of your relationship?

PRAYER

- Thank God for putting you in a loving, thriving community. Bless those around you and encourage each other to fight for your community and your relationship with God.
- Ask God for discernment or sensitivity to know if you've wronged someone in your community. Pray for the person to experience healing and ask for his or her forgiveness.
- Pray for someone who may have wronged you. Ask God for the grace to openly correct the person and for the love and humility to forgive him or her.



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