

Awe: Awed by His Forgiveness

Exodus 34:7

1. Forgiveness is a word we hear a lot about. How would you define forgiveness?
2. Do you identify with either of these 2 positions: a) someone who doesn't feel worthy of forgiveness; b) someone who doesn't think they need forgiveness. How does God's Word speak to each position? Consider Psalm 53:2-3, Romans 3:23, Romans 8:1, and Ephesians 2:1-10.
3. In light of God's nature to "forgive sin," how ought we to think of sin? How seriously do you think the average Christian treats sin? How seriously should we treat it in the church and outside the church? Consider Mark 9:42-48, Romans 6:1-11, Ephesians 2:1-4 and 1 Corinthians 5:12.
4. What do you think is the difference between first time repentance to receive Jesus, and post-conversion Christian confession of sin? Reference 1 John 1:8-10.
5. Are there places in the Christian life that we commonly forget we are forgiven? What makes it hard to walk in forgiveness?
6. Acts 2:36-39 give us an example of how we can respond to the reality that Jesus died for us. What is one response Peter gives in verse 38? What is one other step you can take to walk in forgiveness in light of what Jesus has done this week?

Study Guide for Leaders

(some additional thoughts on the questions)

1. Different Definitions of Forgiveness:

- a. 'The freeing of a person from guilt and its consequences, including punishment; usually as an act of favor, compassion or love, with the aim of restoring a broken personal relationship. Forgiveness can involve both the remission of punishment and the cancellation of debts.' – *Dictionary of Bible Themes*
- b. 'To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.' – *C.S. Lewis*
- c. "...God's grace and forgiveness, while free to the recipient, are always costly for the giver.... From the earliest parts of the Bible, it was understood that God could not forgive without sacrifice. No one who is seriously wronged can "just forgive" the perpetrator.... But when you forgive, that means you absorb the loss and the debt. You bear it yourself. All forgiveness, then, is costly." – *Tim Keller*
- d. "If man had his way, the plan of redemption would be an endless and bloody conflict. In reality, salvation was bought not by Jesus' fist, but by His nail-pierced hands; not by muscle but by love; not by vengeance but by forgiveness; not by force but by sacrifice. Jesus Christ our Lord surrendered in order that He might win; He destroyed His enemies by dying for them and conquered death by allowing death to conquer Him." – *A.W. Tozer*

2. Biblically Forgiveness is:

- a. God forgives the sins of believers on the basis of the once for all sacrifice offered by Jesus Christ on the cross. Believers' sins are no longer held against them, on account of the atoning death of Jesus Christ.
- b. God's forgiveness of believers' sins leads them to pray for his forgiveness of others and to be forgiving in their dealings with other people.

3. Exodus 34:7 speaks of God wanting to remove something from us or lifting something off us. The way He does this is through the person of Jesus. Jesus lifts off our sin by being lifted up with our sin. He dies in our place, for our sin, so we could be forgiven. See Matthew 1:21 and John 12:32.