

# Closer

## TALK IT OVER

### The Gift of Forgiveness

Pastor Andy Wood

November 15-16, 2025

If you would like to watch the weekend message, visit [www.saddleback.com/watch](http://www.saddleback.com/watch).

Open your group in prayer and remember that this is only a guide. Feel free to discuss each of the provided questions or simply dive deeper into just one. Before you close with prayer, take a few minutes to look over the Three Essential Questions toward the end of the document.

### Scriptures Used

Matthew 6:14–15 (NLT), Matthew 18:21–35 (NLT), Hebrews 12:14–15 (NLT)

### Questions:

1. “If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.” — Matthew 6:14–15 (NLT) How does Jesus’ teaching here challenge your understanding about forgiveness, and what emotions or questions does it stir up in you?
2. Why do you think Jesus puts such strong emphasis on forgiveness in our relationship with God? What does this reveal about God’s heart and priorities?
3. The sermon teaches that “God takes unforgiveness very seriously” and that it “cuts me off from the grace of God.” In Matthew 18:21–22, Peter thought forgiving someone seven times was generous. What do Jesus’ words “seventy times seven” reveal about the nature of forgiveness in the Kingdom of God? What do you think it practically looks like to be cut off from grace because of unforgiveness?
4. Jesus’ parable in *Matthew 18:21–35* describes a servant forgiven of an impossible debt who refused to forgive a small one. In what ways do we sometimes behave like that servant, and what helps us break that pattern? How does seeing yourself as the first servant—fully forgiven—shape your ability to forgive others? Why can it be easier to receive forgiveness than to extend it?
5. Jesus’ teaching on forgiveness in this parable concludes in Matthew 18:31–35. It says that God expects us to forgive others “from your heart,” warning of the consequences of withholding forgiveness. What do you think heart-level forgiveness looks like, and how is it different from simply saying the words or acting politely on the surface?

6. The sermon explains that forgiveness is different from trusting again, reconciling, or excusing the hurt. Which of these misunderstandings do you struggle with most, and why?
7. Forgiveness is described as “an event, a process, and a path to freedom.” Which part is easiest or hardest for you, and what does freedom look like on the other side? What helps you move forward?
8. Unforgiveness can function like a prison, a poison, or a barrier to relationship with God. Which of these do you relate to most? Pastor Andy said, “There is always a solution for what stands between you and God.” How has unforgiveness become a barrier in your relationship with God in the past, and how have you seen Him provide a way through?
9. Hebrews 12:14–15 says we must watch out that no “poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you.” What do you think the earliest signs of bitterness are, and how can your small group help uproot it before it spreads?

## Three Essential Questions

The following questions are intended to be open-ended and encourage members to consider how they and what they, or the group, can do as a result of hearing the message.

1. **What did you hear?** *What point in this message was most impactful for you?*
2. **What do you think?** *How did this message challenge, change, or affirm your thinking?*
3. **What will you do?** *How will you or your group put into practice what you've learned today?*

## Small Group Action Steps

1. Consider taking the Group Health Assessment in your small group. This assessment will help you see how your small group is balancing the five purposes and will give you suggested next steps for each purpose. Click here to take the Group Health Assessment:

<https://saddleback.com/connect/smallgroups#spiritualCheckup>

2. Did you know that Saddleback produces many new small group studies each year? Visit <https://saddleback.com/studies> to check out Saddleback's ever-growing library of small group curricula.

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