

Venia

permission, leave, pardon, bow (of the head)

What emotions and thoughts does this film provoke?

What do you think the theme of this film is?

Has there ever been a time when you felt:

Neglected?

Rejected?

Despised?

Used?

Ability to trust taken away?

Everything has been taken from you?

What was the response of your heart when wrong was committed against you?

What happens when forgiveness is withheld. . .

- For the one who was in the wrong?
- For the one wronged?

"Bitterness is like drinking poison and hoping the other person will die." --Unknown

In our hearts, unforgiveness leads to bitterness, and bitterness eats away at us like poison. We think we are hurting the other person to soothe our wounds, but it kills us from the inside.

Where does the ability to forgive come from? Let's read Romans 3:23-24 and Romans 5:8.

Romans 3:23-24: "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

Romans 5:8: "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

- Who has sinned? Who falls short of God's glory? (all of us—Rom. 3:23)
- What did God do when we turned our backs on Him? (He sent Christ, who died for us—Rom. 5:8)
- When did Christ die for us? (while we were still sinners—Rom. 5:8)

We do not have to clean up our acts to come to God before we experience His forgiveness. *While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* That is the demonstration of His love. We were forgiven much, that we might allow Him to forgive others through us.

What do you think about the quote from the film, "*When deep injury is done to us, we never recover until we forgive*"?

Why do you think the son didn't write the card, "Father, I forgive you," before he went to visit his father?

What did the forgiveness the son extended do for the father?

What did it do for the son?

Heart Check:

Is there anyone in your life who has brought about pain, neglect, rejection, or harm that you continue to feel the effects from? How do you feel this is effecting your life?

- What is the reaction in your heart? Are you "drinking poison" through bitterness?
- What step is God asking you to take towards forgiveness?

Is there anyone that you have wronged, causing pain, neglect, rejection, or harm in someone's life?

- Have you admitted that to yourself? To God? To the one whom you have wronged?
- What step is God asking you to take towards seeking forgiveness?

Pray with your group:

- That we might understand God's great love for us, demonstrated through His forgiveness of our wrongs towards Him through His Son Jesus.
- That we might find strength through Christ to forgive others as He's forgiven us.
- That we would allow God to work in our hearts to ask for forgiveness from others when we have been in the wrong.

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