

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

**COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR THAT.**

## Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

### Message Summary

Have you ever found yourself dreaming of a place where everybody loves everybody and no one ever gets mad or upset or misunderstands or gets his or her feelings hurt? That place is called heaven! Jesus prayed for God's will to be done on earth as it is in heaven, and that means that you and I have some work to do because what I described in that first sentence is NOT what most of us experience on earth (or even in the church!). Jesus told His followers in Luke 17:1 that there was no way they wouldn't be offended, but that there was something they could do about it. They could overcome offense if they had 3 things:

1. **Courage to confront.** Because Jesus knew that offense is going to happen, He was willing to address it. We must be, too. The first step toward not picking up an offense is actually pointing out the offense, and that takes courage, especially if we're going to confront the offense the way Jesus wants us to: with honor and grace instead of a "drive by" rant.
2. **Faith to forgive.** It shouldn't really surprise us that the disciples' response to Jesus' words was, "We need more faith!!" Dealing with offense doesn't feel good, and often when we don't feel something, our first thought is that we don't have enough faith. But Jesus was clear: it doesn't take much faith to make a tree fly or a mountain move, so they probably had the faith they needed to forgive the offense and the offender. Forgiveness isn't a feeling; it's a choice to place the offender in God's capable hands.
3. **Humility to honor.** In another one of Jesus' "wait, what" moments, He wraps this teaching up by talking about servants doing their duty without needing to be rewarded for it. At first, it can seem a little out of place, but when we stop and think about it, what Jesus is telling His disciples (and us) is this: the clearest evidence that we've overcome offense is a lifestyle marked by humility and service. Are we willing to serve others with honor? Only hearts freed from offense will be able to.

### Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- If you're like most people, it's easier to see how others are offending than it is to see that you offending (or carrying an offense). Why do you think that's the case?
- Jesus says 3 very important words in verse 3: "So watch yourselves." How important is it that we are aware of our own stuff BEFORE we even begin to overcome offense? How can we watch ourselves?
- Talk about your responses to the word "rebuke" in verse 3. What comes to your mind when you hear it? What emotions do you feel?
- The Greek word for rebuke actually means "to show honor to, to raise the price of." How can courageously confronting offense show honor? How does it add value to the person we're confronting? How does this challenge your previous reaction to the word rebuke?
- Why do you think it takes faith to forgive? Why do we tend to think we don't have enough faith?
- Has God ever changed your heart toward someone in such a way that you were able to truly serve him or her and honor him or her in spite of the offense? How did it change the situation? How did it change you?
- Read Romans 12:19-21 and pray that the Lord would fill each of you with the courage, faith and humility to overcome any offense you may be facing.