

Definition: The ability to release others from all offenses toward you or someone else. The freedom not to seek retaliation or revenge toward others who may have brought you harm. The power to express love toward those who may have sinned again you or others. The choice to “let people go” who may have hurt you.

Ideas for illustrating forgiveness at the chapter meeting: Focus on four words in the definition.

1. Ability: Forgiveness is a supernatural ability that enables us to release others from offenses. It comes from God.
2. Freedom: Unforgiveness makes us slaves of our resentments. Forgiveness sets us free.
3. Power: When we forgive others, we tap in to a great power from God. The power to love.
4. Choice: Unforgiveness always ties us to the person who has brought us harm. Forgiveness begins as a choice. It first sets the offender free. Then it sets us free from the offender. Now I can choose to love.
(You could also share a brief personal story about choosing forgiveness.)

Fire Pit Discussion: Focus Group

1. Discuss the definition
2. Historical events that illustrate forgiveness:
 - a. In the 1970's, Charles Colson admitted to his role in the “Watergate Scandal” and ask America and others to forgive him
3. References in the Bible:
 - a. Matthew 6: 12. What we call the Lord's Prayer
 - b. Matthew 18: 21-35
 - c. Ephesians 4: 32
4. Illustrated in the life of Jesus:
 - a. Matthew 18 Told his disciples they must forgive everyone.
 - b. Luke 23: 34 At the cross
 - c. John 3: 16-17
5. Application: Are there people in your life you need to forgive? Remember, forgiveness brings freedom.