

DISCUSSION GUIDE

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

June 29/July 2, 2017

Forgive and Apologize

BIG IDEA: Our willingness to humbly apologize is key to healthy relationships.

GROUPS VISION

We believe life transformation happens when we engage with other people, with Jesus as our focus, and take next steps together. A next step is where we Ask, Listen, and Respond to take any action that advances our journey with Jesus.

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KEY VERSE

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 4:32

POTENTIAL NEXT STEP

Identify someone in your life who you need to apologize to. Begin to pray about the situation and ask God to give you grace, wisdom, courage and humility to apologize. Plan a time to apologize this week.

Do you have a story of someone taking a next step?
Share with us at
groups@valleycreek.org

MAIN POINTS & SCRIPTURES

If we want long healthy relationships, we have to become good at apologizing. We often talk about forgiving but we rarely talk about apologizing. The forgiveness Jesus offers us is sacrificial and intentional. If we're going to forgive like Jesus, our apologies must be intentional and sometimes even costly. (**Ephesians 4:29-5:2**) Brokenness in families is common, but restoration is possible through a humble apology. (**Genesis 27:34-36, Genesis 33:1-4**)

Here are four principles needed to humbly apologize:

1. **Pray.** Often prayer is our last resort when it should be our first. (**Genesis 32:11 ESV**) We need to invite God into our mess, not as an afterthought, but as a first reaction. (**Jeremiah 29:12 ESV**) Our good Father wants to be with us as we seek out healthy relationships and walk through opportunities to apologize.
2. **Remember who we are.** Our relationships will be the healthiest when we know our identity in Christ. Identity precedes behavior. Jacob received a new name and new identity; God reminded him of his true identity. (**Genesis 32:28, Romans 8:37**)
3. **Come humbly.** When we walk in humility, God gives us grace. (**1 Peter 5:5 ESV, Genesis 33:5-7 ESV**) Humility is living out our identity and has a great impact on ourselves and those around us. When we choose humility we invite grace into our lives; grace to reconcile, heal and restore. Humility positions us for reconciliation.
4. **Take full responsibility.** Taking responsibility demonstrates we need the grace of Jesus in our lives and that others are important. We need to own our mistakes rather than shift blame. Shifting blame is the easy way out.

Steps for humbly apologizing:

- a) Apologize immediately. Don't waste time thinking of a better idea. The longer we wait, the more difficult it becomes.
- b) Be specific. Generic apologies are done to check a box and communicates we don't really care.
- c) Avoid using the words 'if', 'and' or 'but'. Using these words doesn't take responsibility for our actions. It's not the intent of our words that's important, it's the impact.
- d) Avoid pleading our case. Own our part so we can move on in our relationships.

DISCUSSION

1. Our apologies must be intentional and sometimes costly. Describe a relationship which has been, or needs to be, restored through a humble apology? (See intro)
2. We need to invite God into our mess, not as an afterthought, but as a first reaction. Is inviting God into your mess your first reaction? Why or why not? (See point #1)
3. Our identity is named and declared by the King. What is the name others have tried to give you? What is the name God has given you? (See point #2)
4. **What is the Holy Spirit saying to you? What is your next step?**