



Show Me the Money **Jelani Lewis**

Focus Forgiveness is releasing a person from a wrong committed against you, relinquishing the right to punish, and cancelling the debt. When we forgive, we count the loss and then release it. We forgive others because God has forgiven us, and it sets us free.

Fun What is your favorite style of music?

Review Key Scriptures: Matthew 18:21–35; Colossians 3:13

1. What is forgiveness?

In the book of Matthew, Jesus tells His disciples a parable about forgiveness. A man was forgiven a great debt, but he later failed to forgive a small debt owed to him. Forgiveness is like releasing a debt. Forgiveness is not approval of the wrong or automatic reconciliation; it is simply canceling the debt the person owes you and allowing God to deal with them. Letting go and releasing others by forgiving them is often the key to moving forward in life.

2. How do we forgive?

When we let go and release someone's offense by forgiving them, the first thing we must do is count the loss. If we only forgive in general, we don't take into account the specific loss involved. By acknowledging the depth of the injustice or counting the debt you are releasing, it opens the door to a deeper work of healing in your own life. Forgiveness is not a feeling; forgiveness is a choice. We count the loss, and we choose to let it go.

3. Why do we forgive?

We forgive because we have been forgiven. Colossians 3:13 (NLT) tells us this: "Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you.

Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.” Forgiveness sets us free. When we don’t forgive, we carry the burden of that unforgiveness into every area of our life. God wants to set us free from the burden of unforgiveness.

Group Dynamics Idea With the recent crisis situations here and around the world, your group may want to do something together to help. Gateway’s website has a list of specific things you can do to partner with others in the church and make a difference. Helping together as a group is a great way to bring purpose and connection.

Discuss

1. Read Matthew 18:21–35. What stands out to you in this parable? Do you think of it differently after hearing the message?
2. Pastor Jelani Lewis said forgiveness is not approval or automatic reconciliation. Why do people sometimes think these things are synonymous with forgiveness? How does making the distinction help you forgive?
3. Why is it important to take time to grieve the loss or offense before releasing it through forgiveness?
4. Have you had a situation where you needed to forgive, but you first took the proper time to grieve? How did taking time to count the loss help bring healing to you?
5. How does unforgiveness keep us from moving forward in areas of our life?
6. Have you experienced the freedom of letting go of unforgiveness in an area of your life? How did forgiving bring you freedom?
7. Are there any people in your life you need to forgive?
8. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this message?

Take Home

As we conclude, remember the following:

- Forgiveness is releasing a person from a wrong and canceling their debt.
- Count the loss and grieve, then release forgiveness.
- We forgive because God forgave us, and it sets us free.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for forgiving us of every wrongdoing. Thank You for taking our sins and failures on the cross and setting us free. Help us take time to grieve the areas where we've been wronged so we can forgive and release those debts and burdens. Help us to live lives of forgiveness and freedom. In Jesus' name, Amen.

New Leader Tip Forgiveness can be a heavy topic for many people—especially those who have experienced severe trauma. As you approach this topic, be sensitive to where people are in their journeys. As a leader, the key to creating an environment where people can open up is to lay ground rules for confidentiality and safety. When you create a safe environment, people are more likely to open up and be vulnerable.