

Red Letter Christian

Life Group Leaders Guide

Objective

This guide contains the information and questions you will need to lead a life group study during our current sermon series. Our aim is to spark Spirit-led, Bible-centered conversations that anyone can participate in regardless of how biblically literate they may or may not be. **The win** that we want you to experience is when your group members **connect** more closely with each other and with God so that they are encouraged to move forward in living out their faith.

Directions

The *Purpose* and *Move* sections are for the leader to read to the group to provide clarity. **Do not feel pressured to cover all the questions.** Decide which ones may work best for your group. You will see brief notes interspersed between groups of questions to help give the group context for their answers. The *Notes and Commentary* section (when included) is optional reading for the leader to get background information and better understanding of the passages before leading the discussion.

Series Overview

Sadly, when people think of Jesus-followers it is a far cry from who Jesus actually is. After all that Jesus has done for us, we cannot be content with the picture and representation that we are sharing. We must change the story and perception of who Jesus is. We believe that if people truly met the real Jesus, they would really fall in love with Him. In Red Letter Christian, we will be looking at the words of Jesus, so that we become like Jesus, so the world will see Jesus.

Red Letter Christian Series Schedule

Week	Sermon Date	Topic
1	10/20/19	Foundation
2	10/27/19	Being
3	11/3/19	Socials
4	11/10/19	Serve
5	11/17/19	Go
6	11/24/19	Forgive

The Point Church Life Group Curriculum

Forgive

The Big Idea

Forgiven people forgive people.

Flow of Study

Icebreaker: Describe a recent time you had to apologize or ask someone for forgiveness.

Move #1: Let's begin the discussion with some questions unpacking this Sunday's sermon.

1. What stood out to you from the message this weekend about Jesus' teaching on forgiveness?

Move #2: Next, let's explore God's forgiveness.

Read Luke 7:36-50 (NIV)

36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. 37 A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. 38 As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

39 When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

40 Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said.

41 "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty.

42 Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven." "You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

44 Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."

48 Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

2. If you were invited to a dinner party with Jesus, knowing who he was, would you take your seat at the table with the other guests or would you fall at his feet like this woman? Why?
3. What might our responses to the previous question say about how much we perceive we have been forgiven?

4. How might this account be an encouragement to those who feel their sin is unforgivable?
5. How are acts of love a testament to the forgiveness we have received (see verse 47)?

Move #3: Now that we've seen how God forgives, let's discuss how he calls us to do likewise.

Read Luke 17:3-6 (NIV)

3 So watch yourselves. "If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. 4 Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them."

5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" 6 He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you."

6. What role does a rebuke play in forgiveness? What should a rebuke look like?
7. What is the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation? How does the possibility of either depend or not depend on the offender's repentance?

Note to leader: While forgiveness should always be extended to someone who has wronged us (cf. Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-22; Luke 23:34), reconciliation is another matter that depends largely on the person's willingness to repent and rebuild trust. In this text, Jesus' focus appears to be on reconciliation.

8. Which is usually harder for you to forgive: a big offense that happens only once or a small offense that happens over and over again? Why?
9. When you consider your own sins, in which of those two categories (isolated big offenses or repeated small offenses) do you perceive yourself to have been forgiven more?

Note to leader: While all sins are equally condemning and redeemable, not all sins' consequences are as far-reaching. However, we tend to under-estimate both the depth and frequency of our own sinfulness.

10. How does an awareness of how much God has forgiven you change how you forgive others?
11. In both of these passages Jesus connects faith and forgiveness. Why is faith essential for both being forgiven and forgiving others?

Next Steps: The following are things you could challenge your members to do in order to take what you studied in this curriculum farther.

1. Who haven't you forgiven? Meditate this week on how much you have been forgiven and make the choice to forgive, asking God to help you.
2. Continue the Red Letter Challenge.

Prayer: End your study with a time of praying with and for each other. Take requests, but be sure to pray also about what you've discussed today.

Notes and Commentary

The following are pieces of commentary, facts, and links based on the passages of this study in order. Use them to help supplement your group time or for your personal preparation.

On Luke 7:36-50

But there is a reason for her love—her many sins now stand forgiven (v. 47). The one who is forgiven little, on the other hand, loves little. To understand Jesus' point, the parable and his remarks must be put together. According to the parable, the basis of love is a previously extended forgiveness that produces a response of love. So Jesus indicates that the woman's actions reflect her experience of forgiveness from him. The Lord's declaration to her of forgiveness of sins serves to confirm what the parable has already indicated. There also is an implied warning from Jesus to the Pharisee, who probably sees himself as a "little sinner": "Your love may not be great, because you have not appreciated the depth of forgiveness God has made available to you. Instead, you judge this woman in order to gain a good feeling about yourself." Jesus challenges such a way of looking at sin....

Jesus' remark reveals a crucial theological sequence: first an offer of forgiveness from God, then the faith that saves. Such faith evidences itself in the acts of love that she has performed for Jesus.... The deeper we realize that he has dealt with us out of mercy in the midst of our disobedience, the greater will be our response of love. It is dangerous to see ourselves as "little sinners" as the Pharisee did. Rather, we should see ourselves as unworthy objects of God's rich grace, as the woman did. (Darrell L. Bock, *NIV Application Commentary: Luke*)

On Luke 17:3-6

When you forgive someone, you are making yourself their servant, not their master. Forgiving someone again and again ought not to get harder and harder; it shouldn't be a matter of restraining anger for a longer and longer time, like someone trying to hold their breath under water for ten seconds, then for twenty, then for thirty, and so on. If that's what it's like, you've missed the meaning altogether. The point is that you're not scoring moral points at all. You are to be humble, to take no advantage of the situation, to give to the other person the generous and welcoming forgiveness that (as Jesus indicates on numerous other occasions) God has shown you in the first place. That, after all, is the real source of humility. If in doubt, meditate on God's grace.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the disciples realize in verse 5 that all this will require more faith than they think they have. Jesus is quick to respond. It's not great faith you need; it is faith in a great God. Faith is like a window through which you can see something. What matters is not whether the window is six inches or six feet high; what matters is the God that your faith is looking out on. If it's the creator God, the God active in Jesus and the Spirit, then the tiniest little peep-hole of a window will give you access to power like you never dreamed of. Of course, this cannot be used for your own whim or pleasure; as soon as you tried, it would show that you'd forgotten, once more, who this God really was. Humility once again. (N.T. Wright, *Luke for Everyone*)