

JULY 2014



*My Name is
Forgiven*

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Beginning thoughts...

Adultery is so prevalent and in the news—with politicians, movie stars, church leaders and also common people. We read and hear how individuals have walked away from wives/husbands of many years and ruined their lives. Why? Oh, so many reasons and not enough time and space to list them. The main reason: SIN. When I got married 45 years ago, my husband and I had already discussed the fact that it would be for life. I hated the word divorce and still do. Marriage is a covenant between two people to honor, care for, love, provide and protect “til death” parts them. We are still obeying our vows. I plan on being married until the day I die. But wait—could something happen and my marriage fall apart? Absolutely. I know that I must always work to prevent that and remember to ask God’s blessings and protection over it.

Divorce is no stranger within my family. I’ve agonized over family members’ decisions along with them. I continue to love these individuals. Divorce is never easy. Hurt feelings, emotions, conflicts and angry words are hard to mend. Then there’s the children who are devastated and dealing with advice from extended family. It’s a mess! “The woman caught in adultery” may have been married, divorced or just promiscuous. We don’t know whether this was the first time she had broken her marriage vows, or if she had broken up many marriages. The fact that she was caught leads me to believe it wasn’t the first time. Thankfully, it was the last time. She met the Master and her world changed. She was free from the bondage of sin, free to begin again, free to live a good life and free to worship God. That was a glorious day for her and her family. As you are participating in this study, reflect on ways God has graciously given us all the chance to be new creatures in Him.



My Name is Forgiven

OUR SINS

Key Verse: *“But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear” (Isaiah 59:2).*

Key Thought: Realizing that both non-believers and believers struggle with sin, we look to our Judge who extends grace and pardon.

- Write the key verse in your journal.
- Go over the questions and answers on p.25 in *Treasure*.
- Do you like to discuss your sins? (*I doubt it!*)
- Why is “sin” a difficult word? (*Because the letter “I” is right in the middle of it. It’s personal.*)
- Yet, what does Romans 3:23 tell us? Who has sinned? (*ALL*)
- Is it easier to sin or not to sin? Why? (*Our carnal nature—Romans 7:23, 8:5-8; 1 John 2:16*)
- Sermons are often preached on “the woman caught in adultery.” What do we know of her? (*Very little, yet, her story has been told over and over.*)
- Why was her story worth recording? (*It’s for people like her, and us, that Jesus died for—1 John 2:12; Romans 3:24.*)
- My question now is, where was the man in this situation? Why wasn’t he drug to the temple for everyone to see? His guilt should have been as obvious as hers. (*The religious leaders weren’t interested in the man—although he may have been one of them—but they wanted to snare Jesus—John 8:6.*)
- Was this the only time they tried to trap or snare Jesus? (*No—Matthew 19:3, 22:15; Mark 12:13; Luke 20:20*)
- Were they ever successful? (*No*) Why? (*Jesus was sinless, perfect—Matthew 5:48; Deuteronomy 32:4; Hebrews 4:15.*)
- Do you think the “the woman caught in adultery” was thankful for Jesus being there in the temple? (*John 8:10-11*)
- We see that instantly Jesus gave her a new name, “Forgiven.” Do you have that name?
- Write 2 Corinthians 5:21 in your journal. Read the following references: 1 Peter 1:19, 2:22; Hebrews 7:26.

Reflection: Dismiss in a prayer of thanksgiving for God sending Jesus to be our “sin.”



My Name is Forgiven

OUR SAVIOR

Key Verse: *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"* (Ephesians 1:7).

Key Thought: Our Savior, who forgives sin, commands us to follow His example.

- How hard is it for you to forgive someone?
- What do Scriptures tell us to do? (*Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13; 2 Corinthians 2:7; Luke 6:37*)
- What if you have to repeat forgiveness? (*Matthew 18:21-22*)
- Will Jesus forgive us more than once? (*Yes—Psalm 130:7; Acts 5:31; Ephesians 1:7*)
- Go over the questions and answers on p.27 in *Treasure*.
- How could Christ set aside this woman's guilt in the public court? How could He tell her she was forgiven? (*Through His blood—Hebrews 9:22.*)
- Why had Jesus paid the price He did so that we could all be set free of our guilt? (*Love—John 3:16.*)
- Describe your Savior. Tell what He means to you.
- How do you think "the woman caught in adultery" would have described Jesus?
- After her encounter with Him, how would "Forgiven" describe Him? Do you think it was more personal and thankful then?
- When we have guilt, do we tend to withdraw from God and even those around us?
- Do we think we can be self-sufficient?
- Has sin ever made you feel uncomfortable, secretive, lonely, resentful, bitter, or despairing? What can help in these situations? (Seek forgiveness—*Colossians 1:14; 1 John 2:12*)
- We all make choices either good or bad. Which is better for you?
- Read Joshua's choice in Joshua 24:15.
- How does God decide our fate? (*2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Corinthians 4:4; John 8:50*)
- How does God defend us? (*With His divine defense—Isaiah 31:5; Zechariah 9:15; Psalm 59:9, 82:3*)
- Write these names for Christ in your journal: Judge of Israel and Advocate.

Reflection: Dismiss in prayer and thank God for being your decider and defender.



My Name is Forgiven OUR STIPULATIONS

Key Verse: "... And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).

Key Thought: Living forgiven requires that we forsake our sinful patterns and paths of the past and pursue godliness.

- Write the key verse in your journal.
- Go over the questions and answers on p. 29 in *Treasure*.
- The woman caught in adultery left a forgiven woman. What was the story she told from that day forward?
- What is our "story" after we've been saved? Shouldn't it be a testimony of what God has done for us and what we expect Him to do?
- Should we go around shouting this out to everyone we meet? (*No—we do it by living a godly life every day. Opportunities will come to share. When they do, tell what God means to you and in your life.*)
- Do people recognize the changes in your life that forgiveness brings?
- Do you think "Forgiven" went back to her former lifestyle?
- Does an encounter with Jesus change the direction most people go? (*Mark 1:16-18; John 8:12; 1 Peter 2:2*)
- What will enable us to leave the sins and paths of the past behind? (*The Holy Spirit—Acts 2:38; Romans 8:9; 1 Peter 2:2; John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:16.*)
- Think of some examples when the Holy Spirit greatly led some men of the Bible. (*Gideon—Judges 6:34; Samson—Judges 14:19; David—1 Samuel 16:13; and Paul—Acts 19:6*)
- Do we always listen or recognize the Spirit speaking to us? (*No—1 John 3:24*)
- Keep trying to do right. Remember what Paul said in Romans 7:19? Life will have conflicts.
- Forgiven had to know from the day she met Jesus, He was her Shepherd.
- Write the name *Jehovah Rohi*, (Shepherd) in your journal.

Reflection: Dismiss by thanking God for loving you and ask Him to draw Himself closer to you.



My Name is Forgiven

OUR STONES

Key Verse: *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."*

(Galatians 6:1).

Key Thought: A life of forgiveness requires us to drop any stones we would hurl at others alongside the stones others aim at us and place these at the feet of Jesus, trusting He can build His Kingdom in and through us.

- Write the key verse in your journal.
- Would you rather have stones thrown at you or build something constructive with them?
- Easy answer, right? But how often do we feel like we are being pelted from all sides by stones. Name some obvious ones. (*Depression, heart aches, illness, marital troubles, financial issues, and the list goes on and on.*)
- How do we build something constructive? (Forgive yourself; Trust God for healing; Have faith; Pray; (5) Bible Study; (6) Follow leading of the Holy Spirit.)
- Do you know people who have had dramatic Christian conversions? The Apostle Paul was one of the most dramatic in Biblical history. (*Acts 9:3-4, 9, 13; 22:4*)
- How did Paul still consider himself? (*1 Timothy 1:15*)
- Was Paul able to build with constructive stones after his conversion? (*Acts 11:25-26*)
- How many books of the Bible did Paul write? (*13—Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon; and possibly Hebrews, which scholars disagree on, which would total 14.*)
- Think of times in your life when you have succeeded in building constructive stones. (*Share with others in class if you have time. This could be: Taught Sunday School, worked with youth group, was a mentor, went on visitation, carried a meal to a sick person, etc.*)
- Is it better to look to the future or dwell in the past?
- I believe "Forgiven" accepted the salvation Jesus gave her and moved forward. Seek ways that you can do the same.
- In your journal, write this name for Christ: *Cornerstone*. Read Ephesians 2:20; Matthew 21:42.

Reflection: Dismiss in prayer thanking God for His forgiveness and asking Him to make you a "lively stone."

Releasing thoughts...

How often do you stop and think about God loving you no matter what is going on in your life? "I love you to the moon and back," one popular children's book declares. But does anyone really realize how far that is? Just think that God created that moon and loves us infinitely more than that. Concentrate on how much He loves you and determine in your heart to love Him back. We aren't required to give a child to die for Him, but never forget that's what He did for us. Jesus died for everyone, not just the lovable, the beautiful, or people of distinction, but the undesirables, rejects, the outcasts as well. Pick a category for "Forgiven", and then rejoice at the fact that it did not matter to Jesus one second! He graciously forgave all the terrible things she had done. Oh, how He loves us! Oh, what a Savior!