

Each month we have a special memory verse and Life App.
All of our stories revolve around those.

This month's Memory Verse is:
***"Bear with one another and forgive one another
If any of you has a grievance against someone.
Forgive as the Lord forgave you."
Colossians 3:13, NIV***

This month's life app is
Forgiveness
"Deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay."

Weekly, we have a different bottom line that goes with our story and Life App.
So far this month our bottom lines have been:

- 1) Forgive others because God forgives you. (The unmerciful servant)
- 2) When you forgive others, it can change them. (Zacchaeus)
- 3) Take the first step to forgive others. (Jesus teaches on Forgiveness)
- 4) Everyone needs to be forgiven. (The Lost Son-part 1)

Our story for this week is "
The Lost Son-part 2" (Luke 15:21-32)
The **Bottom Line** this week: "When you don't forgive, you miss out."

**Hopefully everyone remembers that last week we talked about a parable that Jesus told, but we didn't finish it.
We saved the ending for today!

What's a parable? Well, when Jesus wanted to share something important, He would often use a story to explain what He meant. The religious leaders, the Pharisees, were grumbling about Jesus because He loved EVERYONE. Not just the people who followed the rules, Jesus forgave all people when they made a mistake.

Jesus knew what these Pharisees were thinking. They thought they were better than everybody else because they followed the rules so well. So, Jesus told a story about a man with two sons. We told the first part last week. Let's do a quick recap to get up to speed.

All right! Let's recap on The Story of the Lost Son . . .

-The younger son said to his father;

"Father, give me my share of the estate (family property)" (Luke 15:12).

-The father wondered "Why" at such a strange request; but he went ahead and agreed.

-The younger son thought "Yay! Party, party, party all the time!!"

-However, it didn't take long and the younger son had wasted ALL of his money. He had even had to take a job feeding the pigs while he starved. He was so hungry he thought about eating the pig slop 😞

-Then he had an idea: "I'll go home, to my father and beg for mercy. Maybe I can be one of his servants."

-BUT...as the younger son got closer to home, his father could see him in the distance and ran to him. Then he threw a party in his honor. His lost son was found!

-So, even though the younger son wasted all of his money, his father welcomed him back and forgave him.
It seemed like the perfect ending, but Jesus wasn't done telling the story yet. Not everyone was so excited.

The father's older son was out working in the fields.
Suddenly, he began to hear a strange sound in the distance.

At first, he was concerned that there was trouble at home, but as he got closer, he realized they were having a party. He was very confused. Why would they be having a party? He called for one of the servants and asked what was going on;

“Your brother has come home . . . Your father has killed the fattest calf. He has done this because your brother is back safe and sound.” (Luke 15:27)

His brother had come home...So what, the older brother did not see this as a reason to celebrate. Instead he couldn't understand how his father could do this to him.

As he turned to leave his father came out and begged him to come and join the party.
The older son said to his father:

“All these years . . . I have always obeyed your orders. You never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But this son of yours wasted your money. . . Now he comes home and for him you kill the fattest calf!” (Luke 15:29-30)

The father explained that it wasn't that he DIDN'T love the older son; he was just so happy that his brother had come home. He said;

“My son . . . everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad. This brother of yours was dead, and now he is alive again. He was lost, and now he is found.” (Luke 15:31-32)

That's where Jesus ended the story.

He didn't say if the older son listened to his father or not. It's up to us to use our imagination.

I wonder, did the older son join the celebration? Did he give up on the jealousy and hurt he felt?
Do you think he choose to forgive his brother? Or did he stay outside, angry, because he didn't think his father was being fair?
Did he stay mad at his brother because he didn't think he DESERVED to have a party?

The problem with choosing NOT to forgive is that we miss out on the good things God is doing in our lives and in the lives of the people around us. The older brother now has a chance to have a relationship with his younger brother, to have a happy family again, besides he is missing a great party; **When you don't forgive, you miss out.**

It can be tough to forgive . . . because if we're honest, we all want things to be fair. It's tough when we feel like someone doesn't DESERVE to be forgiven. But the truth is, we have ALL messed up. We All need forgiveness. When you choose to forgive someone, it's an amazing way to **treat others the way you want to be treated.**

When people experience God's love and forgiveness for themselves, that's a reason to celebrate! God wants us to experience the joy of forgiveness, and He wants us be happy for others who are forgiven, too.

“Let's ask God to help us forgive . . . so we don't miss out!”

PRAY

“God, it can be tough when we feel like someone doesn't deserve forgiveness. It seems unfair when we have to forgive someone when they won't even say they're sorry. But God, it helps when we remember how WE have experienced Your forgiveness for ourselves. Your forgiveness is for everyone! Please help us to forgive like You do so that we can join the celebration instead of missing out. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name, amen.”