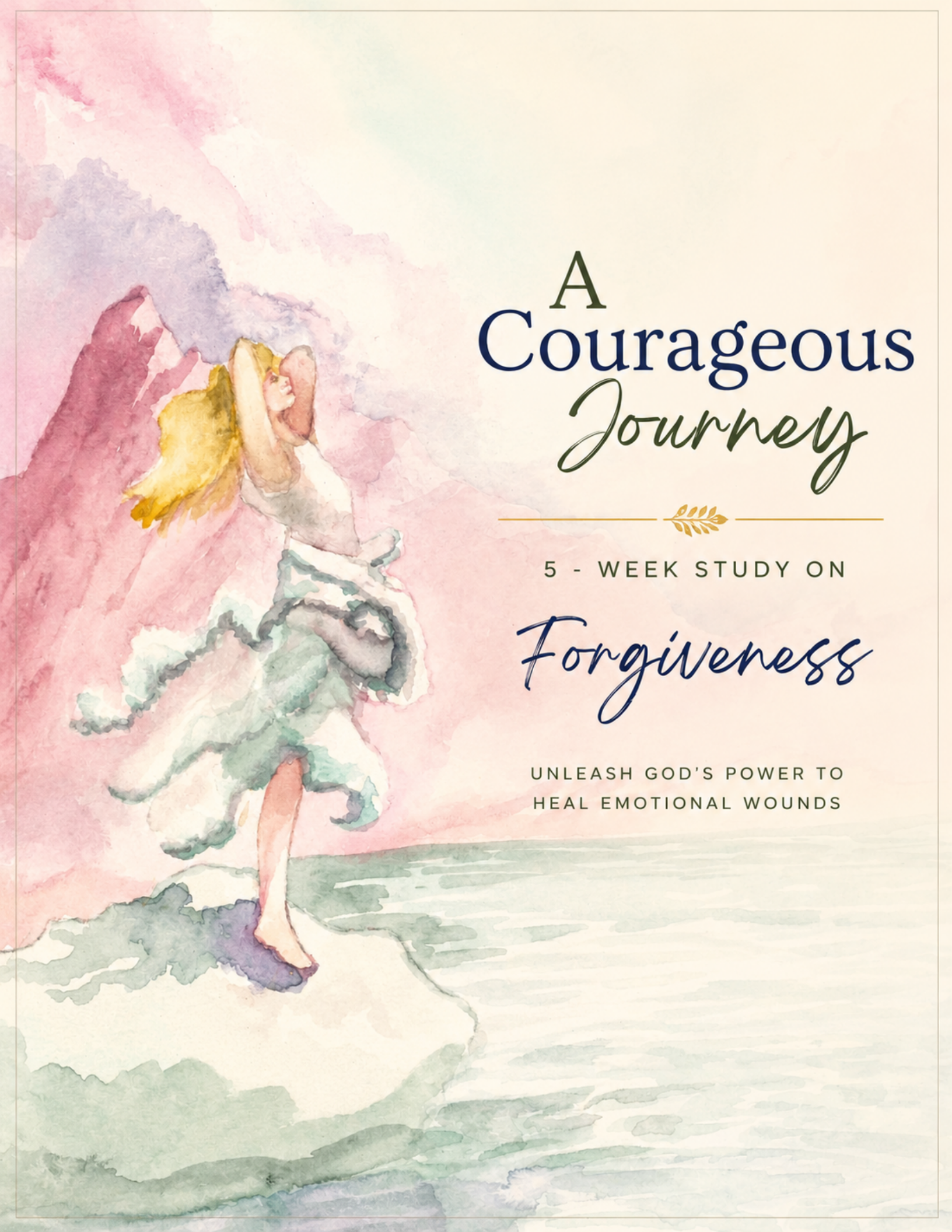




A Courageous Journey



5 - WEEK STUDY ON

Forgiveness

UNLEASH GOD'S POWER TO
HEAL EMOTIONAL WOUNDS

Topic Eight: Forgiveness (Weeks 37-41)

Five-Week Small Group Guide

Welcome to the *A Courageous Journey* Study Guide!

I'm so glad you've chosen to begin this journey with others. My prayer is that God will use your time together to bring encouragement, healing, wisdom, and deeper relationships with Him and one another.

Feel free to adapt the suggestions in this guide to fit the unique dynamics of your group. Create an environment where everyone feels safe and respected, free to share deeply, answer briefly, or simply listen. Some weeks, God may be doing a quiet work in someone's heart that isn't ready to be spoken aloud, and that's okay.

As you meet together, remember that every person's story matters. Listen with compassion, avoid the urge to fix one another, and keep what is shared within the group confidential. Both spoken words and quiet moments can become meaningful ways that God teaches and transforms us.

One of the greatest gifts of studying together is learning from one another's experiences. As we share how God is working in our lives, He often uses those stories to encourage others and to reveal what He may be speaking to them as well.

May this journey draw each of you closer to Christ, and to one another.

Week 1: Understanding Biblical Forgiveness

Personal study recap: This week established a biblical foundation by helping you distinguish God's definition of forgiveness from common misconceptions.

Opening question:

- What concerns or expectations do you have coming into this study on forgiveness?

Discussion Questions:

1. What differences have you noticed between how you see forgiveness and how God sees it?
2. What surprised or encouraged you this week as you focused on forgiveness?
3. When in your study did you feel God speaking directly to you?
4. What can you do to prepare yourself for specific forgiveness that God is asking you to give?

Digging Deeper: This week's Digging Deeper invited you to reflect on a specific incident where you have struggled with understanding or accepting the biblical concept of forgiveness, considering what messages or experiences have shaped your view of forgiveness, and asking God how His model of forgiveness challenges or corrects your understanding and what it would look like to align your perspective with His. Share as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing.

You do not have to share the details of your experience. If you prefer to keep those private, consider sharing this with the group instead:

"One message or experience that has shaped my view of forgiveness is _____, and one way God's model of forgiveness challenges or corrects that view is _____."

Closing prayer: Close your time together by having one person pray over the distorted views of forgiveness that were named, asking God to gently replace each one with the truth of His model and to open every heart in the room to what biblical forgiveness truly looks like.

Week 2: Receiving God's Forgiveness

Personal study recap: This week you were invited to receive God's forgiveness for yourself prior to moving into forgiving others.

Opening question:

- What does it look like to see yourself through the lens of God's grace rather than with guilt or failure?

Discussion Questions:

1. What makes it hard to see yourself the way God sees you?
2. How can you allow God's forgiveness for you to become the foundation for forgiving others?
3. Which Scripture from this week helped you best understand forgiveness?
4. How ready does your heart feel to move into forgiving others, and what would help?

Digging Deeper: This week's Digging Deeper invited you to reflect on a specific sin or failure you struggle to believe God has truly forgiven, asking what makes it difficult to accept His forgiveness in that area and seeking the truth He wants to reveal, including how His character and His Word challenge the belief that any sin is beyond His forgiveness and what fully receiving His grace in that area might look like. Share as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing.

You do not have to share the details of your experience. If you prefer to keep those private, consider sharing this with the group instead:

"One thing that makes it difficult for me to fully receive God's forgiveness in a specific area is _____, and what I sense fully receiving His grace there might look like is _____."

Closing prayer: Close by having one person read 1 John 1:9 aloud slowly over the group, then pray over every heart that is still holding onto guilt God has already removed, asking Him to make the reality of His complete and unconditional forgiveness feel as true in each person's heart as it is in His Word.

Week 3: Extending Forgiveness to Others

Personal study recap: This week you addressed the practical challenges of forgiving those who have caused you deep pain.

Opening question:

- What is the most difficult thing about forgiving someone who hurt you?

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you understand the difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?
2. How can you extend Christlike mercy while exercising wisdom and discernment?
3. What Scripture from this week's study gave you the most clarity or conviction?
4. What step toward forgiving someone is God inviting you to take?

Digging Deeper: This week's Digging Deeper invited you to reflect on a specific relationship where you have struggled to extend forgiveness, asking what barriers have prevented you from fully forgiving that person and seeking the truth God wants to reveal, including how your misconceptions about forgiveness may be keeping you bound to that hurt and what freedom might come from forgiving as He has forgiven you. Share as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing.

You do not have to share the details of your experience. If you prefer to keep those private, consider sharing this with the group instead:

"One barrier that has prevented me from fully forgiving someone is _____, and what I sense the freedom of forgiving as God has forgiven me might look like is _____."

Closing prayer: Invite each person to silently bring to mind the person they are finding most difficult to forgive, then close together in prayer asking God to begin the work of releasing that hurt - not minimizing it, but surrendering it - and to replace the weight of unforgiveness with the freedom He promises on the other side of it.

Week 4: Let's Forgive!

Personal study recap: This week moved forgiveness from theory into practice. You were guided through intentional, biblical steps to help you acknowledge your wounds, forgive, and begin to walk in freedom.

Opening question:

- What distractions or discouragements did you face this week as you worked through the forgiveness steps?

Discussion Questions:

1. Who did God lead you to forgive this week that you thought you had already forgiven?
2. Which step in the process was the most difficult for you?
3. How did you feel after you worked through the steps to forgive?
4. Which steps in this process do you want to carry forward?

Digging Deeper: This week's Digging Deeper invited you to reflect on where you currently are in your forgiveness journey, asking what specific step in the process feels most challenging right now and seeking the truth God wants to reveal, including how you can partner with His grace in that particular aspect of forgiveness and what truth you need to embrace to move forward from where you are. Share as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing.

You do not have to share the details of your experience. If you prefer to keep those private, consider sharing this with the group instead:

"The specific step in my forgiveness journey that feels most challenging right now is _____, and one truth I sense God calling me to embrace in order to move forward is _____."

Closing prayer: Close by praying specifically over each step that was named, asking God to meet every person exactly where they are in their journey and to provide the grace, courage, and truth they need to take the next step - however small it may be.

Week 5: Reflecting on Your Forgiveness Process

Personal study recap: This final week encouraged you to reflect on the work that God accomplished through your forgiveness journey and prepared you for challenges that may still come.

Opening question:

- What challenges do you expect when God awakens your heart to forgive someone?

Discussion Questions:

1. When painful memories resurface, how would you like to respond?
2. What practices will help you maintain a lifelong posture of forgiveness and freedom?
3. What Scripture has been the most helpful during this study?
4. What have you learned that you could share to help others on their forgiveness journey?

Digging Deeper: This week's Digging Deeper invited you to reflect on the most significant change you have experienced through your forgiveness journey, asking how that transformation has affected your relationship with God, yourself, and others, and seeking the truth He wants to reveal - including how He sees your progress and how He might want to use your experience to bring healing to others walking a similar path. Share as much or as little as you feel comfortable sharing.

You do not have to share the details of your experience. If you prefer to keep those private, consider sharing this with the group instead:

"The most significant change I have experienced through my forgiveness journey is _____, and one way I sense God might want to use that transformation to bring healing to others is _____."

Closing celebration: Take a few minutes to celebrate what God has done in your group over these five weeks. Acknowledge one thing you appreciated about someone else in the group. Close your final session in worship, gratitude, and prayer — and if your group is ready, choose your next topic together.
