

MIDDLE SCHOOL IDENTITY IN CHRIST

11

UNITE
I AM CALLED

SERVANTS FORGIVE
BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN
FORGIVEN

SERIES:
GOD IS THE MASTER — I AM A SERVANT



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SERVANTS FORGIVE BECAUSE
THEY HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN**UNITE: I AM CALLED**

The Unite Year is an exploration of what it means to be united in Christ as the family of God (Romans 12:5). When we are saved, we are given a spirit of adoption as sons (Romans 8:15-16), are made a child of God, and we are also saved into a family- the Church. The Unite Year explores how we are to live as a part of a family, and to live in light of our calling as servants and disciples of Christ. We use our gifts to build up the church as we pursue unity, humility, and gentleness with our brothers and sisters in Christ (Ephesians 4:1-2).

BIG TRUTH: SERVANTS FORGIVE BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN**BIBLE VERSE: MATTHEW 18:33**

“And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?”

BIG IDEAS

- Every servant of Jesus owes an unfathomable sin debt that they cannot pay.
- Every servant of Jesus has experienced the forgiveness and lavish grace of God.
- Every servant of Jesus should forgive those who sin against us because we are forgiven.

BIBLE PASSAGE: MATTHEW 18: 21-35**SERIES AIMS****[KNOW] Every student should know that...**

- They are a servant of Jesus
- They have been forgiven an unimaginable debt
- To be a servant means to lay down their lives

[DO] Every student should strive to...

- Forgive anyone who has wronged them as Jesus has forgiven them
- Walk by faith instead of giving into anxiety
- Be known by their allegiance to Christ and the gospel

[FEEL] Every student should feel...

- Awe at the forgiveness they have experienced in Christ
- Thankful for the grace that brought them from death to life and into God’s family
- Unworthy of the mercy and grace they have received

[WANT] Every student should desire to...

- Be faithful and pursue obedience to God
- Sacrifice their comfort and control for the sake of the gospel
- Be committed to Christ above all else

STUDENT WORKOUT OVERVIEW:

Forgiveness is key to serving Jesus. This week we will ponder what it means to be forgiven and to forgive. We will pray for hearts that forgive and we will practice forgiving those who wrong us.

FAMILY WORKOUT OVERVIEW:

Servants of Jesus forgive others. This week we will consider how to discuss with our son or daughter why believers should forgive. We will pray for them to have forgiving hearts and we will lead them to practice forgiving those who wrong them.

SERVANTS FORGIVE BECAUSE
THEY HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN**BIBLE VERSE: MATTHEW 18:33**

“And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?”

Jesus’ servants show mercy to others.

“And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant...”

- Matthew 18:21-35 gives us one of Jesus’ parables. This parable teaches us the importance of recognizing our own sinfulness and the mercy that God has shown us. Jesus’ servants will show mercy to others because they understand the mercy they have received.
- When we understand ourselves and the sinfulness that pervades every part of us, we will show mercy to others. This is a mark of being a follower of Jesus. Those who have known Him will show others mercy.

Jesus’ servants receive mercy.

“...as I had mercy on you?”

- In order to know Jesus, we must first receive His mercy. No follower of Jesus earns his or her place as God’s son or daughter. We are all hopeless and helpless when it comes to our salvation. We must receive the mercy of Jesus Christ in order to be rescued from our sinfulness.
- If we are to be set free from the sin debt we owe, we will experience mercy and submit ourselves to the Lordship of Jesus. When we stop trying to work hard enough or be good enough to earn our salvation, we will receive His mercy and experience forgiveness and freedom.

Jesus’ servants follow God’s example of showing mercy.

“And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant as I had mercy on you?”

- Believers know what mercy is because God shows mercy first. Believers know how to show mercy to others by following God’s example of mercy. It is easy to show mercy to someone we like or who has only wronged us a little. It’s easy if this person has asked for mercy. It’s much more difficult to show mercy to someone who never asks for forgiveness or who doesn’t seem sorry for their actions.
- When we follow Jesus, we follow God’s example of mercy. God showed mercy when we did not deserve, nor did we ask for it. We should show mercy to all people regardless. As we remind ourselves of the undeserving mercy God has shown us, we will find it in us to show others mercy.

SERVANTS FORGIVE BECAUSE
THEY HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN**BIG IDEA #1: EVERY SERVANT OF JESUS OWES AN UNFATHOMABLE SIN DEBT THAT THEY CANNOT PAY.¹****[THIS]**

The parable we find in Matthew 18:21-33 is a sobering example of our sinful hearts. The first servant in this parable owed an unpayable debt to the king. The debt he owed is thought to equal to \$6 billion. The king wanted to settle his accounts and ordered that the first servant be sold along with his wife and children because he could not pay it. The king was right to settle his accounts and to order the man's punishment, yet when the servant begged for mercy from the king, he relented and showed the servant mercy. The king forgave the servant his debt and set him free from the obligation to pay it. Though the first servant had received mercy, when he confronted his fellow servant who owed him money, he chose instead to act harshly toward him. He demanded that his fellow servant pay what was owed. He chose not to show mercy to him. Both of these servants owed a debt that they could not pay. Both needed mercy in order to save their lives. Every person is like these servants; we owe a sin debt that we cannot pay. We all need mercy.

[THEREFORE]**How are you tempted to receive mercy, but not to show it to others?**

Every day we live, we are receiving mercy from God. Because of our sin natures, it's easy to not show mercy to others. We expect to be treated a certain way, but we don't treat others that way. Luke 6:36-37 and Colossians 3:13 teach us to be like Jesus in showing mercy.

[THIS]

Every servant of Jesus is redeemed from the unfathomable sin debt that they owe. Our debt is greater than even the debt the first servant owed in Matthew 18:21-35. Our debt is something that we could never pay. We are hopeless in our sin. We need God's mercy to set us free and to make us right with Him. The mercy that God shows is undeserved. He lavishes His mercy and grace upon us, making us clean in His sight through Jesus. We do not deserve this. We reject God and follow our hearts. We choose to rebel against Him and disobey His commands. He shows us mercy and love and we respond in disobedience and apathy towards Him. Yet, God is rich in His mercy and faithful to save those who repent and believe in His Son Jesus as their Savior. We all are in need of this great mercy in order to truly live.

[THEREFORE]**Read Luke 18:9-14. When you consider your own sin debt, how are you led to show mercy to others?**

When we read this story, it's easy for us to mistakenly think we are the tax collector, but in truth, we are more like the Pharisee. We rely upon our own self-righteousness and this leads us not to show mercy. When we truly grasp our sinfulness, we will willingly show mercy to others.

What does living mercifully look like practically in our lives as servants of Jesus?

Matthew 9:13 helps us understand how to serve and show mercy. God requires obedience and mercy from us more than sacrifice in our serving. We can sacrifice to serve, yet our hearts not be merciful. This displeases God. He requires mercy towards others from us. Micah 6:8 reminds us of the life God requires of us.

1. John 3:27: Salvation is a gift from God and man owes an incredible debt to God for the forgiveness He supplies.

SERVANTS FORGIVE BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN

BIG IDEA #2: EVERY SERVANT OF JESUS HAS EXPERIENCED THE FORGIVENESS AND LAVISH GRACE OF GOD.²

[THIS]

In Matthew 18:21-35, the first servant felt the lavish mercy of the king. He knew what it was like to be forgiven a debt that he could not repay. He was given his life back though he did not deserve it. This lavish grace and forgiveness is a picture of God's forgiveness of mankind. This type of grace is from God. He alone lavishes this incredible grace upon people who reject Him. When we experience saving faith, we experience this type of grace and forgiveness. Forgiveness is necessary for us to know God and have eternal life. Forgiveness is a gift. The person who forgives chooses to do so as a way of relieving a debt owed to them. We owe God a great debt, yet He forgives that debt and counts us worthy of knowing Him and being called one of His own. The first servant in this parable experienced this type of forgiveness. Not only did the king show mercy, he forgave the unpayable debt that the servant owed.

[THEREFORE]

What does it mean that God's grace is lavish and how can you follow His example in your own life?

God's grace is lavish because we are all sinful and do not deserve His grace. Titus 2:11 and John 1:16 remind us that this grace is undeserved and given freely to us by a good, good God. We can follow His example by showing grace to those around us regardless of who they are or how they treat us.

[THIS]

Servants of Jesus are recipients of this lavish grace and they know how to lavish grace on others. As His servants seek to serve others in this life, they do so full of grace. This means that His people serve everyone, even the people who hurt or mistreat us. We show grace to people we may consider less than us or beneath us because God first showed us grace and forgiveness. To be relieved of an unfathomable sin debt is a remarkable thing. The holy God of the universe declares His people righteous in His eyes without their having to do anything but repent and believe. This alone is enough to lead us to serve in a way that exudes grace and forgiveness. As we do this, we will serve others like we have been served. We will love others like Christ loves us.

[THEREFORE]

How have you seen other believers serve with grace and forgiveness?

Serving one another is part of serving Jesus. When we serve others with grace and forgiveness, we are acting as the body of Christ. 1 John 4:19 and Matthew 20:28 help us understand how we need to serve one another and the impact that other believers can have on us.

How has God's lavish grace and forgiveness changed your life?

God's grace and forgiveness make us new creations. We become new people who are able to forgive others and show grace to them. 2 Corinthians 3:18 and 5:17 teach us that we are transformed into new beings. God's grace helps us see who we really are and then in turn helps us show this type of grace to others.

2. Ephesians 1:7-8: God lavishes His forgiveness and mercy upon His people.

SERVANTS FORGIVE BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN

BIG IDEA #3: EVERY SERVANT OF JESUS SHOULD FORGIVE THOSE WHO SIN AGAINST THEM BECAUSE THEY ARE FORGIVEN.³

[THIS]

Paul teaches in Ephesians 4:32 that believers should forgive others because God has forgiven them. We see this truth play out in Matthew 18:21-35. The first servant receives forgiveness, yet he chooses not to forgive what is owed to him. We read this story and feel appalled at the behavior of the first servant. It seems ridiculous to us that the first servant would receive such lavish forgiveness and yet still choose to not forgive. We are like the first servant. We receive lavish forgiveness and grace, yet we hesitate at times to forgive others. We hold onto hurt feelings and hold grudges, when we should forgive others. Forgiveness is paramount to serving God. We are all fallen and broken. If we do not practice forgiveness, we will find ourselves harboring unforgiveness towards nearly everyone we encounter. When we put on tenderheartedness and practice showing grace to others, we can easily forgive them.

[THEREFORE]

What things or people are hard for you to forgive?

Things that hurt us or cause us fear are hard to forgive. People who betray our trust are also difficult to forgive. When we are judgmental, we can find it hard to forgive others.

Read Ephesians 4:32. How does tenderheartedness help you forgive others?

In Ephesians 4:32, Paul writes that believers should be tenderhearted toward one another. Being tenderhearted means being willing to lay aside hurts and mistreatment in order to show kindness and forgiveness to others.

How does God's forgiveness tender your heart and help you forgive others?

Romans 2:5 teaches us what a hard, sinful heart looks like. It is the heart we all have before we have saving faith. Psalm 51:10 shows us what God does to our hearts when we experience His forgiveness. Our hearts are softened and made tender toward Him and others.

[THIS]

Throughout Scripture, we are commanded to forgive others. We really have no other choice but to forgive if we are followers of Christ. Our choosing not to forgive others is like shaking our fist at God saying we will not do what He has done. Servants of Jesus do choose forgiveness. They choose to do the work of forgiveness by submitting their hearts and lives to Jesus every single day. Forgiveness often requires our setting aside and laying down hurts and wrongs daily until we no longer feel we are owed. As we grow in our knowledge of Jesus and truly understand how remarkable it is that God has forgiven us, we can forgive more easily. The first servant had a choice. He could show forgiveness like he had received, or he could demand what was owed him. Unfortunately, he chose to demand what was owed and forgo showing forgiveness. This resulted in his own demise. Servants of Jesus will forgive because they have been forgiven.

[THEREFORE]

What daily habits or disciplines will help you remind yourself of the forgiveness you've received?

Disciplining ourselves to think about the Lord and what He has done for us will help us imitate His forgiveness. Romans 8:6 and Galatians 5:22-23 help us understand the importance of setting our minds on Christ and seeking to be like Him. Ephesians 4:1-3 encourages us to walk in a manner worthy of God. As we seek to live worthy of God's sacrifice on our behalf, we will practice forgiving others.

3. Ephesians 4:32: Because God has forgiven us, we should forgive others.