

ALLEY Rundown September 23- 25, 2023

Today's Bible Story: Please Forgive Me (Forgive One Another) • *Colossians 3:13*

Today's Key Question: Why is forgiveness important?

Today's Bottom Line: Friends forgive one another.

Monthly Memory Verse: *A friend loves at all times. They are there to help when trouble comes.*
Proverbs 17:17 (NIRV)

SLIDE: Theme

Hey, everyone! Welcome to the Alley! I can't believe September is almost over. We've had such a great month around here as we've been looking a little more deeply at this idea of Friendship—using your words and actions to show others you care. We've talked about how showing others you care can look like keeping your promises or standing up for them! Not to mention, using wisdom to choose good friends in the first place!

As we continue today, let's get started with a question. Now, I should warn you, you might not want to answer it because it will mean admitting to something . . . ready for it? Here it is: have you ever gotten into an argument with a friend over something REALLY petty? Like super silly or absolutely ridiculous? Think about it for a second. Turn to the person next to you and tell them about it.

After about a minute, ask if anyone would like to share about their argument. Take several examples as you have time.

Those were some great stories! It's amazing the sorts of silly things we can argue about. I've had arguments over the best color for a sports car—red, of course, who was the best actor—Tom Hanks, the best kind of house pet—labradoodles, and best city in the world—London.

But why are these sorts of arguments silly? *(Take responses.)*

Yes, of course, they're opinions. There are all sorts of 'right' answers to those categories. Someone can easily argue that neon green is the best color for a sports car, Tom Holland is the best actor, Persian cats win the title of best pet, and New York City is the greatest city in the world. But even though these things are opinions, we're sometimes willing to get into arguments over them, maybe even lose friends over them! Then when we cool down and think about it, we realize how silly some of these arguments can be!"

The truth is, though, not every argument is silly, right? We won't be friends with everyone. We might even get along with everyone. And even when we do find someone who is a good friend, at some point, we will get into an argument about something. And some of those things won't be so silly. We might say something we regret, forget something important, or just hurt each other's feelings.

When those sorts of arguments happen with a friend, we might question if the friendship is finished. We might wonder if we wasted our time hanging out and getting to know each other. This is definitely something worth thinking about. Does having an argument with a friend automatically mean your friendship is over? Or is there something you can do to make things right again? Is there a way to move past the hurt and see if the friendship can continue?

Wow. Those are HUGE questions—questions that, honestly, don't have simple answers. But that doesn't mean we don't try to discover the answers. Thankfully we have a great place to start—the Bible! As we've seen all month long, the people who wrote the Bible had a LOT to say about our relationships with each other. They shared what they learned from their experiences with God back then, and their experiences can help people like us today! Let's check it out...

VIDEO: So and So Show (18:01)

You know, it's easy to keep track of all of the things others do wrong to us. In fact, sometimes it feels like holding on to all of them is the best thing we can do. But in the end, they'll keep us from the life God has for us through Jesus.

We can't escape it. Things happen to us all the time that hurt us and upset us. Some of those things can be silly . . . like who has the best video game system. And it's not like that doesn't hurt if you're super into PlayStation. But in the end, it's not as important as some other things in life. But do we want to hold something like that against someone forever and refuse to forgive them?

And like we said, some things can be really serious. And it can take some time to work through some of the pain that was caused. But if they are a good friend, and they really can be trustworthy, working through the misunderstanding and hurt, trusting God and forgiving them might be super worth it in the long run.

Again, there may come a time when you have a friend who hurts you SO badly . . . that you just can't be friends with them anymore. And that's okay, and you can find a parent or caring adult to help you through those times. But even if you need to distance yourself from them, God can help you forgive them, because that will help YOU live with peace and freedom even if you don't ever hang out with that person again.

"Do you know one of the coolest things about forgiving others? When we're willing to do this it's a reminder of what God has done for us. Because the truth is we have done so many things that God has asked us not to. But because of Jesus, God has FORGIVEN us! God has erased all of this. And when we forgive others, we're acting just like God does. So when we're tempted to hold on to our hurt or to make others pay for what they have done, consider these words of Paul and how you can be more like Jesus in forgiving your friends of the wrongs they have done. This is truly the best way to live . . . because this is what God is like!

Today as you go to groups, think about this:

SLIDE: Key Question

Why is forgiveness important? What happens if we decide not to forgive? Is forgiveness just for small stuff . . . or do we need to learn how to do it for the big stuff, too? This will be a great conversation for you to have in small group. Your leaders would love to help you unpack some of these ideas even more. But before you head out, let's pray and ask God to help us be more like Him in the way that we forgive! Let's pray!"

Communicator leads group in a prayer related to what they just heard.

OFFERING:

We will continue to collect money for food baskets to help families in an area in Kenya called Turkana. If you have any offering, you can bring it up now while we watch this video of Turkana families receiving baskets.

Turkana video #2