

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR A CHRISTMAS HOMECOMING by MaryAnn Diorio

QUESTION 1:

Have you struggled with unforgiveness? If so, what has kept you from forgiving and why?

ANSWER 1 (Open-Ended):

Deception is a major reason for unforgiveness. Most of us, at one time or another, have struggled with unforgiveness. We fall into Satan's trap and do not recognize the lies he whispers in order to keep us in the bondage of unforgiveness.

QUESTION 2:

Many wrong notions about forgiveness can keep us from forgiving those who have hurt us. Some of these wrong notions include the following:

- To forgive is to condone wrongdoing.
- To forgive is to allow a guilty person to get away with sin.
- To forgive is to be irresponsible and to tolerate injustice.

What wrong notions about forgiveness have you believed?

ANSWER 2 (Open-ended):

Other wrong notions include:

- To forgive is a sign of weakness.
- To forgive is to be a doormat.
- To forgive is to allow the one who hurt me to take advantage of me again.

QUESTION 3:

Often people have trouble forgiving because, as mentioned above, they think that forgiving means condoning wrongdoing when, in truth, it does not. Sonia in our story had this problem. Have you looked upon forgiving as condoning wrongdoing? If so, are you willing to change your perception of forgiveness?

ANSWER 3 (Open-ended):

To forgive is not to condone wrongdoing. On the contrary, to forgive is to let God be the judge of the person who hurt you. When we truly forgive, we will pray that the person who hurt us comes to repentance.

QUESTION 4:

Is forgiveness a feeling or a choice?

ANSWER 4:

Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. When we choose to forgive, we may not feel like forgiving. But the choice to forgive leads to healing, and healing leads to the disappearance of bitter feelings. In order to forgive, we must walk by faith, not feelings.

QUESTION 5:

It has been said that forgiving someone who hurt you means setting yourself free. What do you think about this concept?

ANSWER 5:

When we refuse to forgive, we remain a prisoner of the one who hurt us. More often than not, the person who hurt us has no clue about the anger and bitterness we may be experiencing over the hurt. To refuse to forgive is to allow the wrongdoer to exert power and control over our lives.

QUESTION 6:

Does forgiving mean you must continue to trust the person who hurt you?

ANSWER 6:

No. Forgiveness and trust are two different things. Forgiveness is freely given. Trust must be earned.

QUESTION 7:

Does forgiving mean forgetting?

ANSWER 7:

Forgiving does not mean forgetting. We can forgive without forgetting. In fact, because of the way our memories are designed, we may never forget the hurtful incident, but it will no longer carry the sting of pain once attached to it.

QUESTION 8:

What is the chief reason for forgiving?

ANSWER 8:

The chief reason for forgiving is obedience to God's command to forgive.

QUESTION 9:

What do you learn about forgiveness from the following Scripture verses?

__ Luke 6: 37

__ Matthew 6: 14

__ Mark 11: 25

ANSWER 9 (Open-ended):

__ Luke 6: 37: We will get back what we give. If we do not forgive, we should not expect to be forgiven.

__ Matthew 6: 14: If we do not forgive others, God will not forgive us. A most sobering thought.

__ Mark 11: 25: Unforgiveness hinders God's response to our prayers.

QUESTION 10:

How will you know if you have truly forgiven?

ANSWER 10:

When we have truly forgiven, we will remember the hurtful incident without emotional pain. If Satan should try to tempt us again with hurtful feelings, we must resist him in the Name of Jesus.