

GO DEEPER: THE JOURNEY OF FORGIVENESS

A Reflection Guide for "The Day Two Grieving Families Chose Love Over Hate"

INTRODUCTION

In this powerful episode of Making Sense of Faith, Adam Hamilton introduces us to a story of radical forgiveness that challenges our understanding of grace, healing, and what it means to truly let go. As you reflect on this conversation, use this guide to explore your own journey with forgiveness and consider how these insights might transform your relationships and spiritual life.

3 REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Take a moment to consider what stood out to you most from this story:

1. What surprised you most about how these two grieving families responded to each other after the tragedy?
2. Think about a time when you've struggled to forgive. How does this father's journey challenge or expand your understanding of what forgiveness means?
3. The father mentions being "on both sides of the coin" - first as a child unable to forgive, then as an adult who chose radical forgiveness. How have your own views on forgiveness evolved throughout your life?

2 KEY INSIGHTS

1. Forgiveness begins with intention

- "Forgiveness begins with the intent of our heart."
- *Question:* What might change if you approached forgiveness as an intention rather than a feeling?
- *Reflection:* Think of a situation where you're struggling to forgive. What specific intention could you set regarding this situation?

2. Self-forgiveness is the foundation

- "We have to forgive ourselves first so that others can forgive us. I know too many people that have done things and they feel like they can never get beyond it."
- *Question:* What have you not forgiven yourself for that might be blocking your ability to forgive others?
- *Reflection:* What would it look like to extend to yourself the same grace you might offer a close friend?

1 PRACTICE EXERCISE

The Forgiveness Visualization

- Find a quiet space and take 5 minutes for this exercise
- Close your eyes and take several deep breaths
- Identify something you're holding onto that needs to be released

- Visualize yourself placing this burden in a container (a box, balloon, boat, etc.)
- Imagine releasing that container (in a river, to the sky, etc.)
- As you watch it drift away, silently say: "I choose to begin the process of letting this go"
- Notice how your body feels afterward - perhaps lighter or more at peace
- Remember that forgiveness is a journey - you may need to repeat this visualization

QUOTES TO CONSIDER

"I saw Mike reaching down and grabbing Philip by the hand and saying, 'Here, let me show you the way.'"

"I don't see it as anything special. I just see it as... That's the way the Lord would want us to do it."

"I've been on both sides of that coin. I was on the side growing up where I had no forgiveness... And then I'm faced with that as an adult for what you might call the ultimate pain of losing a son."

CLOSING REFLECTION

Forgiveness is not a destination but a journey—one that often requires revisiting, recommitting, and continuing to release. As you close this reflection time, consider one small step you can take today toward releasing something you've been holding onto. Remember that true forgiveness is transformative not just for relationships, but for your own heart and mind.

This reflection guide was created to accompany the Making Sense of Faith podcast episode "The Day Two Grieving Families Chose Love Over Hate." For more resources like this, visit makingsenseoffaith.com.