

Scripture Review: 2 Corinthians 2:15 - ¹⁵ For we are to God the *fragrance* of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

Launch – If we are going to be the fragrance of Christ to God, we must pattern our lives after Jesus when it comes to mercy and forgiveness. **When do you find it most difficult to forgive?**

God loves us unconditionally, God forgives us unconditionally, however, the way we often experience God’s love and forgiveness is linked to way we ourselves love and forgive!

- **Read Matthew 6:10-13** – Pay close attention to verse 12. Jesus is implying that you will be forgiven in the same way you forgive, *“Forgive us **our** debts, **as we** forgive our debtors.”*
- This same concept is expressed in **Luke 6:38**, *“...for with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*

God does not **“withhold”** His love, grace, mercy and forgiveness, in fact when Peter asked Jesus how many times we should forgive in **Matthew 18:21-22**, Jesus’ reply is seventy times seven. Meaning that we should always forgive. The same goes for love, grace, mercy etc. The understanding is that when we are able to develop a pattern of **unconditional** mercy, forgiveness, love, and grace **toward** others, we will experience and realize the overwhelming gift of God is deeper and richer than we ever thought.

Explore – Discuss from the following passage how we should develop a life of a mercy and forgiveness.

Matthew 18:23-35

- What accounts do we have to settle? (Financial, relationship, people who have wronged us?)
- How do we handle these accounts? (do we get defensive, argumentative, or merciful?)
- What can we do to prepare ourselves for the next account that must be settled?

Apply – How can you apply what you just studied and learned? What sticks out in your mind about what it means to be loving, merciful, and forgiving?

- What needs to change or be cultivated in your individual life?
- What steps could you take to allow this application to take place?
- What Bible verse could help you stick with your plan?

Prayer – Ask your group to pray for you to take steps to be merciful.