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HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

In your opinion, what does it take for a person to get to heaven and have eternal life?
The Bible answers this question in one word—**FAITH**.

F is for FORGIVENESS

- Everyone has sinned and needs God's forgiveness: *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"* (Romans 3:23).
- God's forgiveness is in Jesus only: *"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace"* (Ephesians 1:7).

A is for AVAILABLE

- God's forgiveness is available for all: *"God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life"* (John 3:16).
- God's forgiveness is available but not automatic: *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 7:21).

I is for IMPOSSIBLE

- It is impossible to get to heaven on our own: *"You are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast"* (Ephesians 2:8-9).

T is for TURN

- Turn means repent. Turn away from sin and self and turn to Jesus alone as your Savior and Lord: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me"* (John 14:6); *"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation"* (Romans 10:9-10).

H is for HEAVEN

- Here . . . Eternal life begins now with Jesus: *"I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance"* (John 10:10).
- Hereafter . . . Heaven is a place where we will live with God forever: *"If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to myself, so that where I am you may be also"* (John 14:3).
- How . . . How can a person have God's forgiveness, eternal life, and heaven? By trusting Jesus as your Savior and Lord. You can do this right now by praying and asking Jesus to forgive you of your sins and inviting Jesus into your heart.

Accepting Christ is just the beginning of a wonderful adventure with God! Follow Christ's command in baptism. Join a church where you can worship God and grow in your faith. Get involved in Sunday School and Bible study. Begin a daily personal worship time in which you study the Bible and pray.

Table of Contents

How to Use	4
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THE SEVEN SAYINGS OF THE SAVIOUR ON THE CROSS

SUGGESTED FOR
THE WEEK OF

	Introduction	6
MARCH 2, 2025	Session 1: The Word of Forgiveness	7
MARCH 9, 2025	Session 2: The Word of Salvation	21
MARCH 16, 2025	Session 3: The Word of Affection	35
MARCH 23, 2025	Session 4: The Word of Anguish	49
MARCH 30, 2025	Session 5: The Word of Suffering	64
APRIL 6, 2025	Session 6: The Word of Victory	78
APRIL 13, 2025	Session 7: The Word of Contentment	92

WHEN GOD SPEAKS

	Introduction	106
APRIL 20, 2025	Session 8: God Speaks	107
APRIL 27, 2025	Session 9: God Speaks by the Holy Spirit	122
MAY 4, 2025	Session 10: God Speaks Through the Bible	136
MAY 11, 2025	Session 11: God Speaks Through Prayer	151
MAY 18, 2025	Session 12: God Speaks Through Circumstances	165
MAY 25, 2025	Session 13: God Speaks Through the Church	179
	Coming Next Quarter	193

MasterWork: Essential Messages from God's Servants

Spring, 2025

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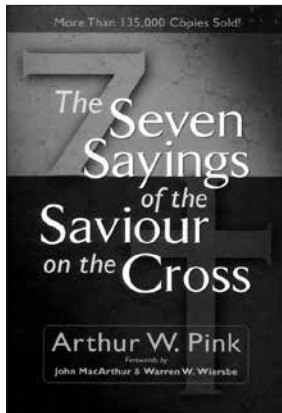
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Books of Study

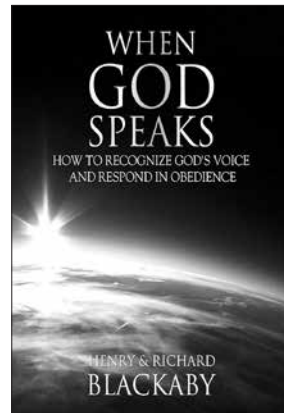
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The Seven Sayings of the Saviour on the Cross

Arthur W. Pink

Baker Publishing Group
ISBN: 978080106573



When God Speaks

Henry and
Richard Blackaby

Blackaby Ministries International
ISBN: 9781735087214

How to Use

Here are a few suggestions to help you get the most out of this resource:

Group Members

1. Read Day One through Day Five prior to attending the group time. Complete the personal learning activities in bold type. Record your notes and questions.
2. Review your notes and questions a few moments prior to the group time as a means of preparing to be an active part of the group.
3. In the margins of this book, record insights gained during the group time.

Group Leader

1. Complete step 1 above.
2. Identify the one main idea and goal for the lesson. The main point of the lesson and the goal are printed on the leader guide pages at the end of each lesson. (See p. 18.) Focus on the session goal as you lead the session.

The main point of this lesson is: God begins to weave the seamless revelation of His plan from the opening of the Bible.

Focus on this goal: To help adults affirm the importance of the beginning in their walk with Christ

Key Bible Passages: Genesis 1–11

Leader Guide

- Read and study the key Bible passages listed at the top of the teaching plan.
- Develop a group time plan. Two options are offered in this book.

- One option is to follow the leader guide at the end of each lesson.
- A second option is to use the discussion questions in the margins of the lessons. Some group leaders use a combination of both group time plans.

written by forty authors over 1,600 years. Sixty-six books tell one seamless story about how God redeems us, and has a future for us. Let's explore the full story of Scripture. How does this story fit with Christians who were successfully fitting in with Christians was

DISCUSS

When might a visit to a library be overwhelming? When might it be exciting?

Discussion Questions

- Customize the electronic versions of the suggested teaching plans, available on the Internet at masterwork.lifeway.com to fit your group.
- Review and refine your teaching notes as you move toward the group time.
- Arrive early, praying for the group time.

SECTION 1

LEADER GUIDE

The main point of this lesson is: God begins to weave the seamless narrative of His plan from the opening of the Bible.

Focus on this goal: To help adults affirm the importance of the beginning of their walk with Christ.

Key Bible Passages: Genesis 1-11

During the Session

STEP 1 - Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

Intelle adults to indicate if they've ever read books or watched movies that were part of a series. Ask: Is it possible to read the books or watch the movies out of order and still enjoy them? What's the value of reading or watching them in order?

Note: reading or watching serial stories in order gives us a better grasp of the overall story and aids in deeper understanding of the characters and plot. helps us see how all the stories fit together. **State:** That's how Scripture is as well. We can know and love individual Bible stories but understanding how they fit together into one seamless narrative can bring the Bible's truth into much clearer focus.

STEP 2 - Getting Started

Intelle a volunteer to read the first two verses of Day One (p. 7).

Relate the author's experience of not understanding what Christians were talking about and how this gained a clearer grasp of the Bible (p. 7).

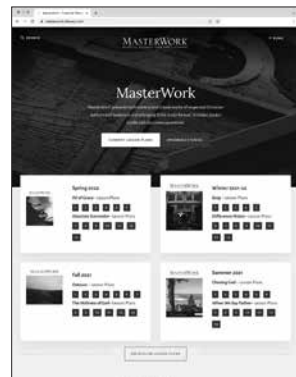
Intelle a volunteer to share what has helped them understand the Bible better.

Relate to author's desire for readers to see Scripture's overarching story and its characters and themes to come to life. **Relay** to author's challenges by reading the Day One paragraph (p. 10) beginning with, "Below we start..."

Discuss: Day One activity 2 (p. 8).

17

Leader Guide



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Study Series: Seamless
Author: Angie Smith

Lesson Title: "The Beginning" (pp. 6-13)
Session 1
September 4, 2022

The main point of this lesson is: God begins to weave the seamless narrative of His plan from the opening of the Bible.

Focus on this goal: To help adults affirm the importance of the beginning of their walk with Christ.

Key Bible Passages: Genesis 1-11

Before the Session

- Prepare TSO (Step 2)
- Label TSO (Step 3)

During the Session

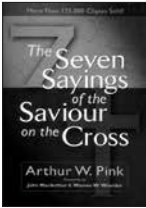
Step 1: Title

Intelle adults to indicate if they've ever read books or watched movies that were part of a series. Ask: Is it possible to read the books or watch the movies out of order and still enjoy them? What's the value of reading or watching them in order?

Note: reading or watching serial stories in order gives us a better grasp of the overall story and aids in deeper understanding of the characters and plot. helps us see how all the stories fit together. **State:** That's how Scripture is as well. We can know and love individual Bible

8

Customizable Teaching Plan



THE SEVEN SAYINGS OF THE SAVIOUR ON THE CROSS



ABOUT THE WRITERS

Arthur W. Pink

Born in England in 1886, Arthur W. Pink was converted to Christ while a spiritualist medium. He attended the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois, in 1910, before taking up his first pastorate at Silverton, Colorado. He pastored other churches in the United States and Australia before returning to his homeland in 1934.

Leslie Hudson

contributed learning activities, discussion prompts, and teaching plans for this study. A member of First Baptist Church, Dickson, Tennessee, Hudson strives to help others find “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” within God’s Word. She practices praying God’s Word for her family, Sunday School class, and community.

The death of the Lord Jesus Christ is a subject of never-failing interest to all who study prayerfully the Scripture of Truth. Four words appear to sum up the salient features of this mystery of mysteries: the death of Christ was natural, unnatural, preternatural, and supernatural.

First, the death of Christ was natural. By this we mean that it was a real death. The One who was “taken, and by wicked hands” crucified and slain was none less than Immanuel (Acts 2:23). How could the eternal One die? He who in the beginning was the Word, who was with God, and who was God, “became flesh.” The reality of it became still more apparent when He was laid in the tomb, where He remained for three days.

Second, the death of Christ was unnatural. By this we mean that it was abnormal. Death is the wages of sin, and He had none. As such, death had no claim upon Him. Even Pilate had to acknowledge that he could find in Him “no fault.” Hence we say, for the Holy One of God to die was unnatural.

Third, the death of Christ was preternatural. By this we mean that it was marked out and determined for Him beforehand. Before Adam was created, the Fall was anticipated.

Fourth, the death of Christ was supernatural. His birth was different from all other births. His life was different from all other lives. And His death was different from all other deaths. The death of Christ, then, was unique, miraculous, supernatural. In the chapters which follow we shall hearken to the words which fell from His lips while He hung upon the Cross . . . words in which is wrapped up the Gospel of our salvation; and words which inform us of the purpose, the meaning, the sufferings, and the sufficiency of the death divine.

THE WORD OF FORGIVENESS

Day 1

Attitude of Prayer

Man had done his worst. The One by Whom the world was made had come into it, but the world knew Him not. The Lord of Glory had tabernacled among men, but He was not wanted. The eyes which sin had blinded saw in Him no beauty that He should be desired. At His birth there was no room in the inn, which foreshadowed the treatment He was to receive at the hands of men.

Shortly after His birth Herod sought to slay Him, and this intimated the hostility His person evoked and forecast the Cross as the climax of man's enmity. Again and again His enemies attempted His destruction. And now their vile desires are granted them.

The Son of God had yielded Himself up into their hands. A mock trial had been gone through, and though His judges found no fault in Him, nevertheless, they had yielded to the insistent clamoring of those who hated Him as they cried again and again, "Crucify him."

The fell deed had been done. No ordinary death would suffice for His implacable foes. A death of intense suffering and shame was decided upon. A cross had been secured; the Saviour had been nailed to it.

And there He hangs, silent. But presently His pallid lips are seen to move—Is He crying for pity? No. What then? Is He pronouncing malediction upon His crucifiers? No. He is praying, praying for His enemies—"Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

DISCUSS

Is forgiveness considered to be a strength or weakness in today's world? How do you view a forgiving person?

1. Take a deep breath and read the opening paragraphs again, aloud and slowly. What do you observe of Jesus in the fact that He prayed for the forgiveness of His enemies?

The first of the seven cross-sayings of our Lord presents Him in the attitude of prayer. How significant! How instructive! His public ministry had opened with prayer (Luke 3:21), and here we see it closing in prayer. Surely He has left us an example! No longer might those hands minister to the sick, for they are nailed to the Cross; no longer may those feet carry Him on errands of mercy, for they are fastened to the cruel tree; no longer may He engage in instructing the apostles, for they have forsaken Him and fled—how then does He occupy Himself? In the ministry of prayer! What a lesson for us.

DISCUSS

Who is the most forgiving person you know? What impact does a person's willingness to forgive have on his or her relationships?

Perhaps these lines may be read by some who by reason of age and sickness are no longer able to work actively in the Lord's vineyard. Possibly in days gone by, you were a teacher, you were a preacher, a Sunday-school teacher, a tract-distributor: but now you are bedridden. Yes, but you are still here on earth!

Who knows but what God is leaving you here for a few more days to engage in the ministry of prayer—and perhaps accomplish more by this than all your past active service. If you are tempted to disparage such a ministry, remember your Saviour. He prayed—prayed for others, prayed for sinners, even in His last hours.

In praying for His enemies, not only did Christ set before us a perfect example of how we should treat those who wrong and hate us, but He also taught us never to regard any as beyond the reach of prayer. If Christ prayed for His murderers then surely we have encouragement to pray now for the very chief of sinners! Christian reader, never lose hope.

Does it seem a waste of time for you to continue praying for that man, that woman, that wayward child of yours? Does their case seem to become more hopeless every day? Does it look as though they had gotten beyond the reach of divine mercy?

Perhaps that one you have prayed for so long has been ensnared by one of the Satanic cults of the day, or he may now be an open enemy of Christ. Remember then the Cross. Christ prayed for His enemies. Learn then not to look on any as beyond the reach of prayer.

2. In the space below, describe your prayer life according to the questions.

Do you have set times of prayer?

Do you have an ongoing prayer list? Who or what is on it?

How often do you pray spontaneously in times of joy?

How often do you pray spontaneously in times of despair?

How does the prayer of Christ from the cross inspire you to pray?

Day 2

The Prophetic Word

How much God made known beforehand of what should transpire on the day of days! What a complete picture did the Holy Spirit furnish of our Lord's Passion with all the attendant circumstances! Among other things it had been foretold that the Saviour should "make intercession for the transgressors" (Isa. 53:12). This did not have reference to the present ministry of Christ at God's right hand.

It is true that "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25), but this speaks of what He is doing now for those who have believed on Him, whereas Isaiah 53:12 had reference to His gracious act at the time of His crucifixion.

Observe what His intercession for the transgressors is there linked with “And he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

1. This section focuses on how Isaiah 53 prophesied the crucifixion of Christ. Read it and underline every phrase that pointed to the death of Jesus.

That Christ should make intercession for His enemies was one of the items of the wonderful prophecy found in Isaiah 53. This chapter tells us at least ten things about the humiliation and suffering of the Redeemer.

It declared that He should be despised and rejected of men; that He should be a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; that He should be wounded, bruised and chastised; that He should be led, unresistingly, to slaughter; that He should be dumb before His shearers; that He should not only suffer at the hands of man but also be bruised by the Lord; that He should pour out His soul unto death; that He should be buried in a rich man’s tomb; and then it was added, that He would be numbered with transgressors.

Here then was the prophecy—“and made intercession for the transgressors”; there was the fulfillment of it—“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34). He thought of His murderers; He pleaded for His crucifiers; He made intercession for their forgiveness.

Here we see Christ identified with His people. “Father, forgive them.” On no previous occasion did Christ make such a request of the Father. Never before had He invoked the Father’s forgiveness of others.

Hitherto He Himself forgave. To the man sick of palsy He had said, “Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee” (Matt. 9:2). To the woman who washed His feet with her tears in the house of Simon, He said, “Thy sins are forgiven” (Luke 7:48). Why then should He now ask the Father to forgive, instead of directly pronouncing forgiveness Himself?

Forgiveness of sins is a divine prerogative. The Jewish scribes were right when they reasoned “who can forgive sins but God only” (Mark 2:7). But you say, Christ was God. Truly, but man also—the God-man. He was the Son of God that had become the Son of Man, with the express purpose of offering Himself as a sacrifice for sins. And when the Lord Jesus cried “Father forgive them,” He was on the Cross, and there He might not exercise His divine prerogatives.

DISCUSS

How should we respond to seeing the prophecies of Isaiah 53 fulfilled in the crucifixion of Christ? How can the study of the Old Testament, with New Testament eyes, strengthen our faith?

DISCUSS

Christ prayed for His murderers; His intercession was for those who hated Him. Are we called to do the same (Matt. 5:44)? Do we?

Day 3

The Divine Estimate

Here we see the divine estimate of sin and its consequent guilt. Under the Levitical economy God required that atonement should be made for sins of ignorance. “If a soul commit a trespass, and sin through ignorance, in the holy things of the LORD; then he shall bring for his trespass unto the LORD a ram without blemish out of the flocks, with thy estimation by shekels of silver, after the shekel of the sanctuary, for a trespass offering; And he shall make amends for the harm that he hath done in the holy thing, and shall add the fifth part thereto, and give it unto the priest: and the priest shall make an atonement for him with the ram of the trespass offering, and it shall be forgiven him” (Lev. 5:15-16).

1. Summarize Leviticus 5:15-16 into one sentence.

And again we read, “And if ye have erred, and not observed all these commandments, which the LORD hath spoken unto Moses, even all that the LORD hath commanded you by the hand of Moses, from the day that the LORD commanded Moses, and henceforward among your generations;

Then it shall be, if ought be committed by ignorance without the knowledge of the congregation, that all the congregation shall offer one young bullock for a burnt offering, for a sweet savor unto the LORD, with his meat offering, and his drink offering, according to the manner, and one kid of the goats for a sin offering.

And the priest shall make an atonement for all the congregation of the children of Israel, and it shall be forgiven them; for it is ignorance: and they shall bring their offering, a sacrifice made by fire unto the LORD, and their sin offering before the LORD, for their ignorance” (Num. 15:22-25). It is in view of such Scriptures as these that we find David prayed, “Cleanse thou me from secret faults” (Ps. 19:12).

DISCUSS

Have you ever committed a sin that you didn't realize was sinful? How did you respond to that sin? According to Leviticus 5:15-16, how does God view that sin?

DISCUSS

How do the instructions in Leviticus 5:15-16, Numbers 15:22-25, and Psalm 19:12 point to Luke 23:34?

Sin is always sin in the sight of God—whether we are conscious of it or not. Sins of ignorance need atonement just as truly as do conscious sins. God is holy, and He will not lower His standard of righteousness to the level of our ignorance. Ignorance is not innocence. As a matter of fact, ignorance is more culpable now than it was in the days of Moses. We have no excuse for our ignorance. God has clearly and fully revealed His will. The Bible is in our hands, and we cannot plead ignorance of its contents except to condemn our laziness. God has spoken, and by His Word we shall be judged.

2. How comfortable are you with the fact that we are held responsible for all of God's Word to us? What does the above paragraph inspire you to do?

And yet the fact remains that we are ignorant of many things, and the fault and blame are ours. And this does not minimize the enormity of our guilt. Sins of ignorance need divine forgiveness, as our Lord's prayer here plainly shows. Learn then how high is God's standard, how great is our need, and praise Him for an atonement of infinite sufficiency, which cleanseth from all sin.

Day 4

Blindness of The Human Heart

Here we see the blindness of the human heart. "They know not what they do." This does not mean that the enemies of Christ were ignorant of the fact of His crucifixion. They did know full well that they had cried out "Crucify him." They did know full well that their vile request had been granted them by Pilate. They did know full well that He had been nailed to the tree, for they were eye-witnesses of the crime.

What then did our Lord mean when He said, “They know not what they do?” He meant they were ignorant of the enormity of their crime. They “knew not” that it was the Lord of Glory they were crucifying. The emphasis is not on “they know not,” but on “they know not what they do.”

1. You may have never called for the murder of an innocent person, but when have you been “ignorant of the enormity” of your own sin? How does this memory help you process Christ’s prayer in Luke 23:34?

And yet they ought to have known. Their blindness was inexcusable. The Old Testament prophecies which had received their fulfillment in Him were sufficiently plain to identify Him as the Holy One of God. His teaching was unique, for His very critics were forced to admit “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46).

2. Have you ever told yourself, “I should have known better!” when you failed to live faithfully in a situation? How did that moment shape your faith?

And what of His perfect life! He had lived before men a life which had never been lived on earth before. He pleased not Himself. He went about doing good. He was ever at the disposal of others. There was no self-seeking about Him. His was a life of self-sacrifice from beginning to end. His was a life ever lived to the glory of God.

His was a life on which was stamped Heaven’s approval, for the Father’s voice testified audibly “This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). No, there was no excuse for their ignorance. It only demonstrated the blindness of their hearts. Their rejection of the Son of God bore full witness, once for all, that the carnal mind is “enmity against God.” How sad to think this terrible tragedy is still being repeated! Sinner, you little know what you are doing in neglecting God’s great salvation.

DISCUSS

What relationships (friends, mentors, family, and so on.) help you to see the significance of your sins and respond to them appropriately? If you don’t have that accountability, how might you intentionally allow someone to call you to it?

You little know how awful is the sin of slighting the Christ of God and spurning the invitations of His mercy. You little know the deep guilt which is attached to your act of refusing to receive the only One who can save you from your sins.

You little know how fearful is the crime of saying, "We will not have this man reign over us." You know not what you do. You regard the vital issue with callous indifference. The question comes today as it did of old, "What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?" for you have to do something with Him: either you despise and reject Him, or you receive Him as the Saviour of your soul and the Lord of your life.

But, I say again, it seems to you a matter of small moment, of little importance, which you do. For years you have resisted the striving of His Spirit. For years you have shelved the all-important consideration. For years you have steeled your heart against Him, closed your eyes to His appeals, and shut your eyes to His surpassing beauty.

Ah! you know not WHAT you do. You are blind to your madness. Blind to your terrible sin. Yet are you not excuseless. You may be saved now if you will. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). O come to the Saviour now and say with one of old, "Lord, that I might receive my sight" (Mark 10:51).

DISCUSS

How do the two above paragraphs reveal the clear dividing line between believers and unbelievers? How do these paragraphs beg us to respond?

Day 5

Our Great and Primary Need

In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord taught His disciples "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (Matt. 5:44).

- 1. In the text of Matthew 5:44, underline the four action verbs we are commanded to do in response to people who are unkind to us. Grade yourself on each of the four actions: how well do you follow through?**

DISCUSS

How carefully do we adhere to this command from the Sermon on the Mount? Why is that?

Above all others, Christ practiced what He preached. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. He not only taught the truth but was Himself the truth incarnate. Said He, “I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6). So here on the Cross He perfectly exemplified His teaching of the mount. In all things He has left us an example.

Notice Christ did not personally forgive His enemies. So in Matthew 5:44 He did not exhort His disciples to forgive their enemies, but He does exhort them to “pray” for them. But are we not to forgive those who wrong us?

This leads us to a point concerning which there is much need for instruction today. Does Scripture teach that under all circumstances we must always forgive? I answer emphatically, it does not. The Word of God says, “If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4).

Here we are plainly taught that a condition must be met by the offender before we may pronounce forgiveness. The one who has wronged us must first “repent,” that is, judge himself for his wrong and give evidence of his sorrow over it.

Does God ever forgive where there is no repentance? No, for Scripture declares, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

If one has injured me and repented not, while I cannot forgive him and treat him as though he had not offended, nevertheless, not only must I hold no malice in my heart against him, but I must also pray for him. Here is the value of Christ’s perfect example. If we cannot forgive, we can pray for God to forgive him.

Here we see man’s great and primary need. The first important lesson which all need to learn is that we are sinners, and as such, unfit for the presence of a Holy God.

It is in vain that we select noble ideals, form good resolutions, and adopt excellent rules to live by, until the sin-question has been settled. It is of no avail that we attempt to develop a beautiful character and aim to do that which will meet God’s approval while there is sin between Him and our souls. What will matter most in the hour of death is: Have my sins been put away by the blood of Christ?

DISCUSS

What if the offender doesn’t repent? Can you still forgive? How do you handle the relationship in a God-honoring way?

2. Some believers have no problem processing their sin; they are more than aware of it. However, if you're reading these lessons, attending class, and preparing for your group time, this last paragraph is for you. Reread it and write your prayerful response on the lines below.

The second all-important lesson which all need to learn is how forgiveness of sins may be obtained. What is the ground on which a Holy God will forgive sins? And here it is important to remark that there is a vital difference between divine forgiveness and much of human forgiveness.

As a general rule, human forgiveness is a matter of leniency, often of laxity. We mean forgiveness is shown at the expense of justice and righteousness.

In a human court of law, the judge has to choose between two alternatives: when the one in the dock has been proven guilty, the judge must either enforce the penalty of the law, or he must disregard the requirements of the law—the one is justice, the other is mercy.

The only possible way by which the judge can both enforce the requirements of the law and yet show mercy to its offender, is by a third party offering to suffer in his own person the penalty which the convicted one deserves.

Thus it was in the divine counsels. God would not exercise mercy at the expense of justice. God, as the Judge of all the earth, would not set aside the demands of His holy Law.

Yet, God would show mercy. How? through One making full satisfaction to His outraged Law. Through His own Son taking the place of all those who believe on Him and bearing their sins in His own body on the tree. God could be just and yet merciful, merciful and yet just.

Thus it is that “grace reigns through righteousness.” A righteous ground has been provided on which God can be just and yet the justifier of all who believe.

Hence it is we are told, “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; And that repentance and remission [forgiveness] of sin should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:46-47).

And again, “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses” (Acts 13:38-39).

It was in view of the blood He was shedding that the Saviour cried, “Father, forgive them.” It was in view of the atoning sacrifice He was offering, that it can be said, “without shedding of blood is no remission.”

In praying for the forgiveness of His enemies, Christ struck right down to the root of their need. And their need was the need of every child of Adam.

Have your sins been forgiven? that is, remitted or sent away? Are you, by grace, one of those of whom it is said, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Eph. 1:7)?

Here we see the triumph of redeeming love. Mark closely the word with which our text opens: “*Then*.”

The verse which immediately precedes it reads thus, “And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand and the other on the left.”

- *Then*, said Jesus, Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:33-34).
- *Then*—when man had done his worst.
- *Then*—when the vileness of the human heart was displayed in climactic devilry.
- *Then*—when with wicked hands the creature had dared to crucify the Lord of Glory.

He might have uttered awful maledictions over them. He might have let loose the thunderbolts of righteous wrath and slain them. He might have caused the earth to open her mouth so that they had gone down alive into the pit.

But no. Though subjected to unspeakable shame, though suffering excruciating pain, though despised, rejected, hated, nevertheless, He cries, “Father, forgive them.” That was the triumph of redeeming love. “Love suffereth long, and is kind . . . beareth all things . . . endureth all things” (1 Cor. 13:7). Thus it was shown at the Cross.

LEADER GUIDE

The main point of this lesson is: Reveal that Christ's death on the cross shows us His divine love and forgiveness.

Focus on this goal: We should recognize the significance of Christ's sacrifice and allow Him to influence our own life.

Key Bible Passage: Luke 23:34

Before the Session

Read carefully the introduction and read a brief overview of the author, Arthur Pink.

Pray that your group will accept the challenges and blessings that come from this book.

During the Session

STEP 1 - Create Interest / Jumpstart Discussion

As learners arrive, **ask:** *Is there one line from your favorite movie that has been etched in your memory? What is that line and who says it?*

Enlist a few volunteers to deliver these wonderful lines and for each one **ask:** *What does that line reveal about that character?*

As a group, **consider** how our favorite characters are often epitomized by their classic lines.

Transition to the new by study by **saying:** *We know that Jesus had many classic statements throughout His life, but for the next seven weeks, we're going to be studying the seven statements He made from the cross and what we learn about Him from these statements.*

STEP 2 - Attitude of Prayer

Provide a brief overview of the author and his life.

Pray for the upcoming seven weeks of study in this book. If you have a personal story of how one person's forgiveness shaped your life, share that with the group.

Say: *We can all be impacted by forgiveness; it touches us, changes us, and reveals the forgiver's love.* Invite learners to close their eyes and listen as you read aloud the opening paragraphs of the Day One (p. 7).

Engage learners in discussing what this statement from the cross allows us to observe about Jesus on Day One activity 1 (p. 8).

STEP 3 - The Prophetic Word

Invite a volunteer to read Isaiah 53 aloud.

Say: *You've likely heard this passage read as a prophecy for Christ's death, but our author engages us in looking specifically at verse 12.*

Read that verse aloud, and use the Day Two (pp. 9-17) to draw the line connecting the prophecy that the Savior would make intercession to our focal verse in Luke 23:34.

Point out that Jesus was revealing His prayer for forgiveness as He fulfilled the Isaiah 53:12 prophecy.

Invite learners to consider a situation in which forgiveness might come easily and compare that to an issue in which we would struggle to forgive; point to Christ's willingness to forgive as well as God's perfect plan for Him to do it.

STEP 4 - The Divine Estimate

Invite a volunteer to read Leviticus 5:15-16 aloud, followed by Numbers 15:22-25. Reread the focal verse from Luke 23:34, and as a group consider that God does not disregard sins of ignorance; even unintentional sins must be atoned.

Share a personal story of yourself (or your child) who was given a "pass" from a punishment for an action because of a young age or lack of understanding of the rules.

Point out that God, in His holiness, does not excuse sin, even due to inexperience, lack of knowledge, or any other reason.

Ask: *How do these verses reveal the utmost importance of Christ's sacrifice for our sins?*

STEP 5 - Blindness of The Human Heart

Read Luke 23:34 again, aloud, stressing the words “what they do” (KJV).

Use the opening paragraphs of Day Four (p. 13) to point out the significance of that phrase: *they were ignorant of the enormity of their crime, and yet their blindness was inexcusable.*

Point out that we, too, often downplay our own sins with statements such as, “It’s not that big of a deal” or “I’m not hurting anyone.”

Challenge learners to see every sin through the eyes of Christ’s prayer on the cross: every sin carried the burden of His atoning sacrifice.

STEP 6 - Our Great and Primary Need

Invite a learner to read Mathew 5:44 aloud. Begin a discussion considering how Christ fulfilled that very instruction in His prayer in Luke 23:34.

Lead the group into a discussion posed by our author in Day Five (pp. 14-17).

Ask: *Does God's Word teach that under every circumstances we must always forgive?*

Encourage learners to listen to the author and one another with patience and love!

Ask: *Have you ever forgiven someone who didn't ask for it and probably didn't deserve it? How did that help YOU?*

STEP 7 - Practical Application – Live Out the Lesson

As you began this lesson, **close** it similarly by reading aloud the last paragraphs of the Day Five (pp. 16-17).

Briefly share any insights you gained from this week’s excerpts and close with prayer, thanking Jesus for the immense forgiveness He demonstrated on the cross.

Challenge learners to love, pray for, and forgive graciously this week.

Close in prayer.