

5 Marks of a Forgiven Soul Community Group Discussion Guide

The 5 marks were originally written by Bishop JC Ryle in Liverpool England, 1800s. Pastor Michael preached from these 5 points this weekend.

5 marks of a forgiven soul

Tell them: A lot of times people doubt their own forgiveness, or salvation. Or, they may even doubt the salvation of others. How can we tell if we are forgiven? Looking at these 5 marks are a good first step to embracing your forgiveness and living like a person forgiven by God:

1. Forgiven souls hate sin. – Tell them: Pastor Michael told us that if you don't hate evil, but you relish it, then it's time to recognize that your soul might not be forgiven. He got this from Psalm 97:10: "You who love the Lord, hate evil! He protects the lives of His faithful followers; He delivers them from the power of the wicked."

Ask them: What does this verse tell us about our feelings about sin? Are there some sins that you accept in your life and do not hate? What are some of those acceptable sins we talked about a few weeks ago?

Tell them: Pastor Michael said that a believer might love some evil and act upon it, but in the end, they will feel guilt and shame. This feeling of guilt is a good sign

of salvation. If you have no shame for what you have done, then it may be time to question your salvation (See Romans 7).

Note: If someone in your group struggles with forgiveness share Romans 10:9 and 1 John 1:9 with them.

2. Forgiven souls love Christ – Ask them: How does someone who loves Christ act differently than those who don't?

Tell them: John 14:21 says, “The person who has my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will reveal myself to him.”

Ask them: What does this verse say it means to love Christ? (To keep his commandments.)

Tell them: Pastor Michael reminded us of the sum of all of the commandments.

Ask them: Do you remember what it was? (To love God and our neighbor. Matt. 22:37-40)

Tell them: If you fail to love others that is one thing, but if you recognize or are confronted with your failure to love, and you have no concern for it, then you may not yet be forgiven. Pastor Michael said that loving people into yourself is not love. In other words, trying to fix them and make them into yourself is not loving others.

Ask them: What do you think of that idea?

Ask them: What are some ways that we can love in a biblically faithful way? (For help with that think about 1

Corinthians 13 and/or the list of the fruit of the Spirit found in Galatians 5:22-23.)

3. Forgiven souls are humble – Tell them: One of the defining marks of forgivingness and therefore salvation is humility. In fact, humility is the foundation of all righteousness. Without it there would be none. Therefore, humility is a great sign of a forgiven soul. When confronted with our own humility the response, for the forgiven soul, is shame, not arrogance. Pastor Michael cited Romans 12:3 - “For by the grace given to me I say to every one of you not to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think, but to think with sober discernment, as God has distributed to each of you a measure of faith.” (Romans 12:3)

Ask them: What does this tell us about our faith? (God gives it to us) How does this fact impact our humility? (We cannot be arrogant about what we did not generate)

Tell them: Romans 3:10-12 says, “There is no one righteous, not even one, there is no one who understands, there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, together they have become worthless; there is no one who shows kindness, not even one.””

Ask them: How does this apply to humility?

Ask them: What would you say are some qualities of humility? (kindness, being slow to speak, peaceful, generous, selfless, loving. Not bragging about yourself, no humble brags, not putting yourself first.)

Tell them: Pastor Michael said generosity is humble.

Ask them: What makes generosity humble?

Tell them: Harper's Bible Dictionary says that "humility is a socially acknowledged claim to neutrality in the competition of life."

Ask them: What do you think about this idea?

4. Forgiven souls are holy - Tell them: Holiness is freedom from moral evil. It is being cut off from what is unclean. Ask them: Why are forgiven souls holy? (see 2 Cor 7.1 - "Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from everything that could defile the body and the spirit, and thus accomplish holiness out of reverence for God.") Tell them: Pastor Michael said the pursuit of holiness is not a pursuit of perfection but of becoming more and more like Jesus.

Ask them: What do you think of this idea?

5. Forgiven souls are forgiving –Tell them: Pastor Michael said that if you aren't very forgiving you probably are struggling with actually being forgiven.

Ask them: What do you think about this idea? "Tell them: Matthew 6:14–15 says, "For if you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive you your sins."

Ask them: What do you think of this idea of forgiving others being tied to your own forgiveness?

Tell them: Pastor Michael said: "A crucial mark of a forgiven soul is their ability and desire to forgive." Luke 17:3 sheds some light on the process of forgiveness.

Let's talk about what the requirements are here: "Watch yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him. If he repents, forgive him." (Luke 17:3)

Ask them: How do you think we should respond to the sin in another's life who does not repent?

Ask them: Why do we sometimes refuse forgiveness?

Ask them: Is there a difference between getting over it and forgiveness?

Ask them: Which one of these 5 signs of a forgiven person is the hardest to live in and why?

Tweetable Quotes to Remember

1. Humility is a great sign of a forgiven soul. When confronted with our own pride the response of the forgiven is agreement, not arrogance or anger.
2. A crucial mark of a forgiven soul is their ability and desire to forgive.
3. Humility is a socially acknowledged claim to neutrality in the competition of life. (Harper's Bible Dictionary)
4. Humility is the foundation of all righteousness; Pride is the foundation of all sin.