

# 2017

## BEST YEAR EVER

# WEEK 1

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## DISCUSSION GUIDE

### Introduction:

It's early in 2017 and the year is full of possibilities: we have space to plan, space to hope, and space to dream. What if this year, 2017, was the best year ever? What would that look like? Over the next eight weeks, we will talk about some concrete steps that we can take to make this year not just better than the last, but the best year that we and our church have ever experienced. The first step: embrace forgiveness.

### Scripture:

Matthew 6:14-15 - "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Matthew 18:32-33 - "Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?'"

### Discussion Questions:

1. What year would you consider to be your best year ever? What made it so great?
2. Jesus lays out a spiritual law in Matthew 6: that if we forgive, we are forgiven.
  - Why do you think that he says this?
  - How have you seen this play out in your own life?
3. In Matthew 18, the king in Jesus' story is incredibly upset with his servant for not sharing the mercy he had received. Why do you think the king makes such a big deal out of this?
  - Where do you see yourself in this story?
4. Have you ever held onto unforgiveness?
  - What impact did it have on you & your life?
  - What impact did it have on the other person?
5. We get to make the decision whether we forgive someone or not, but each time we choose not to forgive, we place ourselves in prison; we lose a little freedom. When Jesus tells Peter in Matthew 18:22 that he should forgive "not seven times, but seventy times seven", he is saying that we should not just forgive completely, but continually.
  - Where do you have an opportunity to forgive completely and continually this week?
  - How does offering forgiveness help you grow in your relationship with Jesus?
6. Forgiveness is not achieved, it is received.
  - Is there somewhere that you need to allow yourself to receive forgiveness this week?

### Take the Next Step:

If you know Jesus, it is only because of the grace that God offered you. If you took a step toward modeling what it means to live the abundant life (life with Jesus), how would that impact the people around you? If we all began to understand that forgiveness is the key to our freedom, how would the tone of our culture change?