



Study Guide for Groups  
**Episode 7: Extreme Forgiveness**  
Topic: Forgiveness, Reconciliation

Listen to the interview with John Perkins and engage in the following discussion and questions.

- What were your reactions to hearing about John's early life growing up in rural Mississippi and all that happened to him and his family there?
- During the times John was beaten and imprisoned, he felt a strong urge to hate the people who hated him – it seemed a natural reaction. Are there moments in your own life or times when you've seen something happening in the world (like 9/11 for example) when your strong reaction has been to hate? What was that like for you? What did you find yourself wanting to do? How did you handle it?
- John said, *"I could almost sense that it was a weight on me, I began to see that forgiveness was my way of shedding the reaction to hatred in my own life."* How has forgiveness changed your life as you've been able to forgive others? How did you feel after you really were able to forgive someone?
- John said, *"Forgiveness frees me. I have been loved; not only have I been loved by God, but I've been loved by God's people. And I have seen God's people as an agent of that love."* Give examples from your own life - large or small – where you have experienced God's people acting as "agents" of God's love.
- How can we deal with and respond to racism in our society today?

Listen to this week's "Media Matters" segment with Steve Carpenter. Steve discusses the movie *Crash*, which is also on the theme of racial reconciliation and forgiveness. You can discuss the questions below whether or not you're familiar with that movie.

- Steve said that it can be difficult to talk about racism in church and that *"Some have called 11 o'clock on Sunday morning "the most segregated hour in America."*
  - How does your church handle the issue of race and racial reconciliation?
  - Has it ever been discussed? If not, do you feel it should be a more prominent conversation in your congregation?
  - How would you suggest making this a topic of conversation in your church?