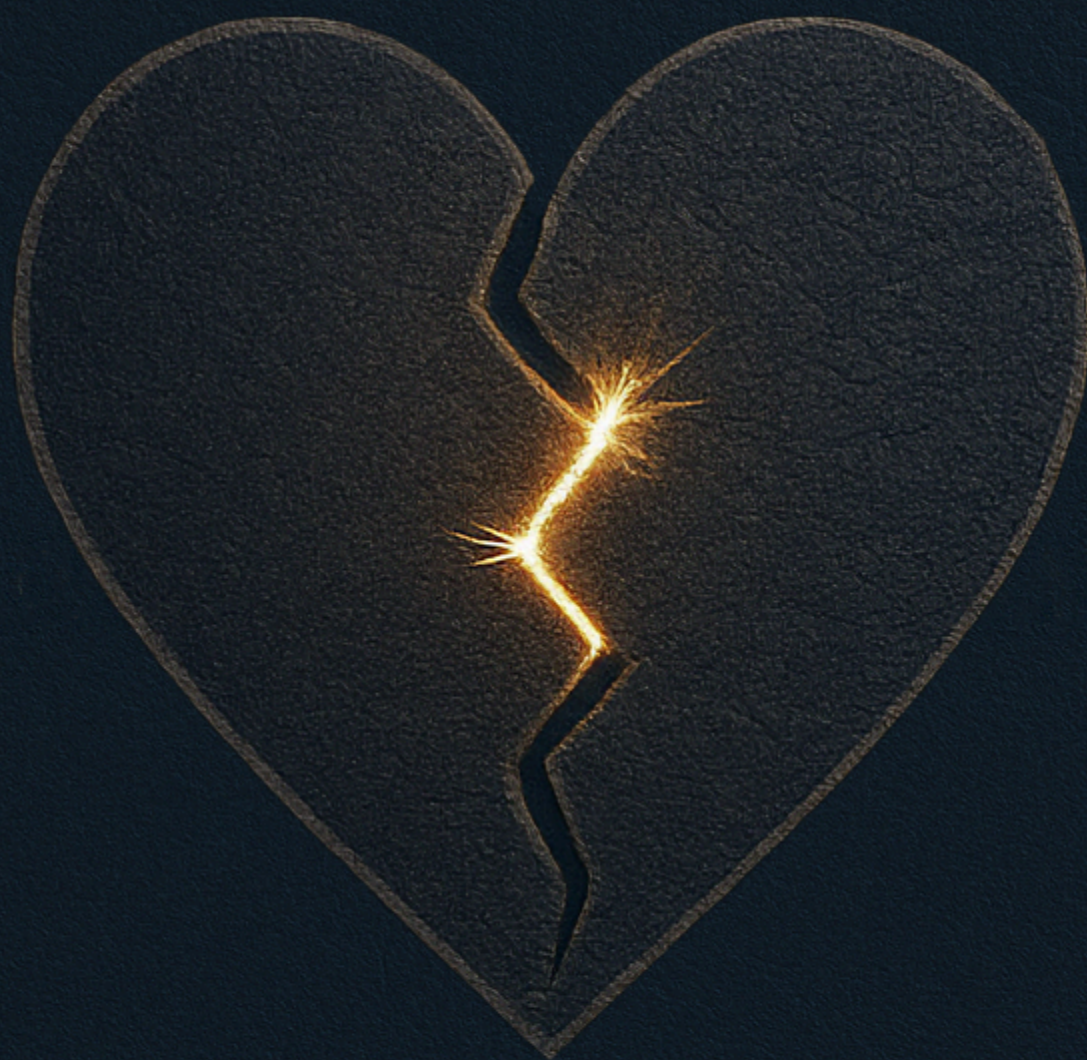


The Path of Forgiveness

Devocional for 7 days



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Introduction

The root of forgiveness

Before beginning this devotional, it is important to pause and reflect on the deeper meaning of the word forgiveness.

Etymology of “Forgiveness”

The word forgiveness comes from the vulgar Latin *perdonum*:

per- = completely, thoroughly.

gift = gift, gift.

👉 Etymologically, forgiveness means “complete gift,” a total gift given to another without conditions.

Day 1

God's Forgiveness as a Foundation

Base Bible Text: 1 John 1:9

Reflection:

Forgiveness comes from God, and only He has the authority to forgive sins (Mark 2:7). His great mercy opens the door for His forgiveness to be manifested, thus restoring communion between God and humanity, not because of our merits, but because of Christ's work on the cross (Ephesians 1:7). Therefore, no one can experience forgiveness without first receiving God's forgiveness.

Just as the Word teaches in 1 John 4:19: “We love Him because He first loved us,” authentic forgiveness is born first in God, not in us. Therefore, we cannot experience genuine forgiveness unless we have first known God.

Key ideas:

- God's mercy gives us access to his forgiveness (Psalm 103:8–12).
- Only God forgives sins (Mark 2:10).
- The only forgiveness that cleanses us completely is the forgiveness of God (Isaiah 1:18).
- God's forgiveness restores our relationship with Him (Romans 5:1).
- To experience the abundance of God's forgiveness, it is necessary to recognize the greatness of our sin (Luke 7:47).

Personal application:

- Have I recognized my need for God's forgiveness every day?
- Am I living with the assurance that Christ has already forgiven me?

Suggested prayer:

Lord, thank You for Your mercy and the gift of forgiveness that cleanses and restores me. Help me always remember that true forgiveness comes only from You.

Day 2

Forgiveness is a gift, not a demand.

Base Bible Text: Ephesians 2:4–5

Reflection:

Forgiveness is not something we deserve, but a gift of God's grace. The Bible teaches that we were forgiven through Christ's sacrifice, even when we were His enemies (Romans 5:8).

Jesus, even on the cross, forgave those who crucified Him (Luke 23:34). This gives us a clear idea of how we should forgive others: following His example, without conditions or demands (Matthew 10:8). Therefore, forgiveness is not an obligation or something that can be imposed, but an act of love that reflects the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

Key ideas:

- We do not deserve God's forgiveness, yet we have it (Ephesians 2:8–9).
- God forgave us when we were his enemies (Romans 5:10).
- Jesus forgave his executioners (Luke 23:34).
- Forgive as God forgave us (Ephesians 4:32).
- Forgiveness is given joyfully as an act of love and not out of obligation (2 Corinthians 9:7).
- Forgiveness reflects the nature of the gospel: undeserved grace (Titus 3:5).
- Forgiveness is not negotiated, it is given as a gift (Romans 3:24).

Personal application:

- Do I treat forgiveness as a duty or as a gift that flows from grace?
- Is there someone I need to extend this gift to without expecting anything in return?

Suggested prayer:

Father, teach me to forgive as you have forgiven me, with love and grace. Help my heart see forgiveness as a gift, not a burden.

Day 3

The consequences of unforgiveness

Base Bible Text: Hebrews 12:15

Reflection:

Lack of forgiveness opens the door to bitterness and resentment and makes us easy prey for Satan (2 Corinthians 2:10–11). Jesus taught that if we do not forgive others their trespasses, we will not receive forgiveness from our Father (Matthew 6:14–15).

Resentment turns into a poison that destroys not the offender, but ourselves. When we hold resentment and fail to forgive, our hearts become a source of bitterness (Matthew 15:11; James 3:11–12). Furthermore, unforgiveness not only creates rifts in our relationships with others but also distances us from fellowship with God (1 John 4:20).

Key ideas:

- God will not forgive us if we do not forgive (Matthew 6:15).
- Lack of forgiveness breeds bitterness and resentment (Hebrews 12:15).
- We are easy prey for Satan when we hold on to a grudge (2 Corinthians 2:10–11).
- Lack of forgiveness distances us from God and others (Isaiah 59:2).
- Lack of forgiveness not only hurts relationships, it also affects our fellowship with God (Matthew 5:23–24).
- Resentment is a poison that first destroys the one who holds it (Proverbs 14:30, Job 5:2).

Personal application:

- Do I hold resentment in my heart that prevents me from having peace?
- Am I letting bitterness control my thoughts and relationships?

Suggested prayer:

Lord, show me if there are roots of bitterness in my heart. Cleanse me of all resentment and teach me to live in freedom and communion with you, forgiving those who have offended me.

Day 4

Forgiveness as an act of obedience and living sacrifice

Base Bible text: Colossians 3:13

Reflection:

Forgiveness is a command, not a suggestion. Jesus established a condition for following him as true disciples: denying ourselves (Luke 9:23) and giving up our right to take justice into our own hands (Romans 12:19).

Forgiveness implies obedience, because if we truly love Christ, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15). Furthermore, the Word teaches that “a servant is not greater than his master” (John 13:16); this means that if He forgave, we should do the same as the Master.

Key ideas:

- To forgive is to give up our right to justice (Romans 12:19).
- Forgiveness is a commandment of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 18:21–22).
- Forgiving our brother is a requirement of obedience (Matthew 6:15).
- Forgiveness is part of our identity in Christ (Ephesians 4:32).
- Forgiveness is an expression of our daily cross (Luke 9:23).
- Forgiveness is not optional for the Christian, but part of his nature in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Personal application:

Am I willing to obey Christ even though my flesh desires righteousness?

In what situation should I die to myself to honor the Lord with forgiveness?

Suggested prayer:

Father, give me an obedient and forgiving heart, even when it's hard. Teach me to deny myself and reflect Christ in my choices.

Day 5

Forgiving is not forgetting, it is freeing.

Base Bible Text: Hebrews 12:1

Reflection:

Forgiveness doesn't erase memories, but it does free us from the burden of resentment. Joseph didn't forget what his brothers had done to him, but he chose to see God's hand in the midst of their suffering and forgive them (Genesis 45:5; Genesis 50:20). And even when he was sold into slavery and unjustly imprisoned, his spirit was free because of his trust in God and the gift of His forgiveness.

Forgiveness is about losing in order to gain: we let go of the desire for revenge in order to obtain freedom and peace (Ephesians 4:30–32). Each time you forgive, you shouldn't keep a record of it and then throw it in someone's face (Matthew 18:21–22). Rather, the goal is restoration, freedom of spirit, and fellowship in the peace of Christ (Philippians 4:5–9).

Key ideas:

- Forgiveness is a process of healing the brokenhearted (Psalm 147:3).
- Forgiveness does not seek to accumulate offenses like debts in a record but to restore relationships as often as necessary (Matthew 18:21–22).
- Forgiveness frees the forgiver more than the offender (Proverbs 17:9).
- It does not mean justifying what is wrong, but rather leaving it in God's hands (Romans 12:19).
- Diligently guarding our hearts involves living in the gift of forgiveness (Proverbs 4:23, Ephesians 4:31–32).

Personal application:

- Am I confusing forgiveness with justifying wrongdoing?
- What burden do I need to free myself from today to live in peace?

Suggested prayer:

Lord, help me let go of the pain without justifying sin. Give me freedom in my heart to live no longer bound by the past, but rather trusting in you.

Day 6

Forgiveness requires genuine repentance

Base Bible Text: Acts 3:19

Reflection:

True forgiveness is linked to and dependent on repentance. Furthermore, it cannot prevail in proud hearts (James 4:6). Genuine repentance involves acknowledging the error, changing course, and, if necessary, making restitution (Luke 19:8).

Romans 12:2 teaches us that we must be transformed by the renewing of our minds to test and approve of God's good, pleasing, and perfect will. Therefore, forgiveness not only means letting go of the desire for revenge, but also filling our spirit and mind with His Word. Thus, genuine repentance leads us to live in the knowledge and obedience of His will. (James 1:21)

Key ideas:

- Forgiveness requires us to humble ourselves (James 4:10).
- True forgiveness involves radical change (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- Genuine forgiveness expects nothing in return, but seeks to restore (Luke 19:8).
- Forgiveness cannot prevail in proud hearts (James 4:6).
- Genuine repentance involves confession of sins (Proverbs 28:13).
- The fruit of repentance changes the way we think and act. (James 1:21-26)

Personal application:

- Am I willing to acknowledge my faults and humbly ask for forgiveness?
- Have I shown fruits of genuine repentance in my life?

Suggested prayer:

Lord, break my pride and humble me to ask for forgiveness. May my life show real change and my heart always seek reconciliation.

Day 7

Forgiveness in two directions

Base Bible text: Matthew 7:3–5

Reflection:

Forgiveness is not only about receiving it from God and granting it to our brothers and sisters, but also about asking for it from those we have offended.

God's Word teaches that to obtain His forgiveness, we must humble ourselves before His presence. But what happens when we commit a sin against our brother? Although the Bible does not command us to humble ourselves before men, but before God, acknowledging our sins before others involves humility (Colossians 3:12–13). Therefore, one of the most difficult tasks is often admitting our offenses before those we have hurt, especially those we have directly offended.

Key ideas:

- We must also be willing to ask for forgiveness (James 5:16).
- We are often more responsible than we think (Matthew 7:3–5).
- When we receive forgiveness, we should reciprocate and show mercy (Matthew 18:32–33).
- Two-way forgiveness reflects reconciliation in Christ and others (2 Corinthians 5:18).
- Forgiving and asking for forgiveness are part of living in Christian community (Colossians 3:13).

Personal application:

- Who do I need to apologize to today for my part in a conflict?
- Do I reciprocate in receiving forgiveness, showing mercy and compassion?

Suggested prayer:

Father, teach me to live in reconciliation. Give me the humility to ask for forgiveness when I fail, and the grace to always forgive as you forgave me.

A hidden treasure

Dear brother in Christ:

I hope this devotional has been a great blessing to your life. I also want to share with you a teaching God has placed on my heart about forgiveness.

On the next page you will find a brief excerpt from my study of John 13:4–17.

The peace of the Lord be with you.

A hidden treasure

A teaching of Jesus that many still do not understand

We all know the story of Jesus washing his disciples' feet (John 13:7-10). Many think it was primarily a lesson about service, and while it was certainly an act of humility that also teaches us to serve, Jesus' central purpose was to show that washing feet represented the forgiveness of sins.

That's why he said, "He who is already washed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean." And who is "completely clean" from sin except the one who has been forgiven by God? (Isaiah 1:18). Furthermore, Jesus said to Peter, "If I do not wash you, you will have no part with me," meaning that without forgiveness there can be no fellowship.

Finally, Jesus affirmed that no servant is greater than his Master and that they should do the same as He. With this, He taught that, just as He forgives us, we too should forgive one another's offenses.



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