

## **5-Day Devotional: The Freedom of Forgiveness**

### **Day 1: The God Who Forgives**

**Reading:** 1 John 1:9; Nehemiah 9:17

**Devotional:** Forgiveness begins not with us, but with God. Before we ever consider forgiving others, we must first grasp the profound truth that we are forgiven. God's character is fundamentally forgiving—it's not just something He does, it's who He is. When we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us, not because we deserve it, but because of His unchanging nature. This divine forgiveness isn't earned through our performance or worthiness; it flows from His goodness and grace. Today, pause and reflect on the forgiveness you've received. Let the reality of God's mercy toward you sink deep into your soul. When you truly understand how much you've been forgiven, forgiving others becomes less about their worthiness and more about your identity as one who has been forgiven.

### **Day 2: Forgiveness Without Limits**

**Reading:** Matthew 18:21-22; 1 Corinthians 13:5

**Devotional:** Peter thought he was being generous when he suggested forgiving seven times—more than double the religious standard of his day. But Jesus shattered that ceiling, calling us to forgive seventy times seven. This isn't a math problem; it's a heart posture. Jesus calls us to forgive without keeping score, without limits, without conditions. Love keeps no record of wrongs. This kind of forgiveness challenges our natural inclination toward justice and scorekeeping. It's hard because it requires us to release our right to revenge repeatedly. Yet this is exactly how God forgives us—completely, continuously, without counting our offenses. Today, ask yourself: Am I keeping a mental ledger of wrongs? What would it look like to erase that record and forgive as freely as I've been forgiven?

### **Day 3: The Cross Covers It All**

**Reading:** Ephesians 4:30-32; Colossians 2:13-14

**Devotional:** Every wrong ever committed—against God and against you—was nailed to the cross. Jesus bore the weight of all transgressions in His body. This means the hurt you're carrying, the offense you can't forget, the betrayal that still stings—Jesus already paid for it. God doesn't minimize our pain; He acknowledges it fully. Our sins grieve the Holy Spirit. But rather than holding them against us, God directed His righteous anger toward His Son. The cross is where justice and mercy meet. When you struggle to forgive, direct your eyes to Calvary. The debt has been paid. The record has been canceled. Who are you to demand

payment for what Jesus already purchased with His blood? The forgiven must become forgivers. Let the cross be your reason and your power to release others.

#### **Day 4: Forgiveness Brings Freedom**

**Reading:** Micah 7:18-19; Hebrews 8:12

**Devotional:** Holding onto unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting someone else to die. Bitterness does more damage in the vessel where it's stored than on the person it's poured toward. God casts our sins into the depths of the sea and remembers them no more—complete, total release. When we refuse to forgive, we chain ourselves to the past, allowing old wounds to dictate our present and poison our future. Medical research confirms what Scripture teaches: forgiveness decreases anxiety, anger, and depression while increasing hope and well-being. Forgiveness isn't primarily about the other person; it's about your freedom. It's pulling weeds repeatedly until they stop growing back. Today, identify one person you need to forgive. Speak these words aloud: "Jesus forgives you, and so do I." Feel the weight begin to lift.

#### **Day 5: Forgiving Like God**

**Reading:** Matthew 6:14-15; Luke 6:37

**Devotional:** Jesus makes an uncomfortable connection: our willingness to forgive others is directly tied to our experience of God's forgiveness. This isn't about earning salvation through forgiveness, but about demonstrating that we've truly understood grace. When we refuse to forgive, we reveal that we haven't fully grasped how much we've been forgiven. Forgiving like God means acknowledging the hurt without denying it, releasing the debt without demanding payment, and surrendering our desire for vengeance to Him. Some people you forgive, you may never be reconciled with—and that's okay. Forgiveness doesn't require reconciliation or removing consequences; it requires releasing them from the debt you feel they owe you. Today, pray this prayer: "Lord, help me forgive as You have forgiven me. Give me Your grace to release what I cannot release on my own."

# Scripture References from the Sermon

## ## Explicitly Mentioned or Quoted:

1. **Matthew 18:21-22** - Peter's question about forgiveness and Jesus' response about forgiving 70 times 7
2. **Nehemiah 9:17** - "You are a forgiving God"
3. **1 John 1:9** - "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us"
4. **1 Corinthians 13:5** - "Love keeps no record of wrong"
5. **Ephesians 4:32** - "Forgive one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you"
6. **Ephesians 4:30** - "Our sins grieve the Holy Spirit of God"
7. **Colossians 2:13-14** - "He forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross"
8. **Micah 7:19** - "You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea"
9. **Hebrews 8:12** - "He will remember our sins no more"

## ## Alluded to or Implied:

10. **Psalm 86:5** - "You, Lord, are forgiving and good" (quoted in sermon)
11. **Matthew 18:15-20** - The context before Peter's question about dealing with conflict in Christian community
12. **Romans 12:19** - The concept of not seeking vengeance (implied in discussion of directing anger to the cross)
13. **Isaiah 53:4-6** - Jesus bearing our transgressions in his body (alluded to when discussing Jesus bearing offenses on the cross)

14. **1 Peter 2:24** - Jesus bore our sins in his body on the cross

## Relevant Verses for Main Themes (Not Directly Mentioned):

15. **Matthew 6:14-15** - Forgiving others as we've been forgiven

16. **Luke 23:34** - "Father, forgive them" - Jesus modeling forgiveness

17. **Colossians 3:13** - Bear with each other and forgive as the Lord forgave you

18. **Mark 11:25** - Forgive when you stand praying

19. **Romans 5:8** - God's love demonstrated while we were still sinners