

# You Don't Need To Forgive Them

*Jesus Never Said That*

*April 19th, 2026*

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## OPENING QUESTION

How would you describe the difference between saying 'I forgive you' and actually living with a forgiven heart?

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

**Main Reading:**

Matthew 18:21-35

**Additional Reading:**

Luke 23:34

1 John 1:9

## KEY TAKE AWAYS

- You will have the ability to release people from a debt you were never meant to collect.
- When you have forgiveness, it stops the past from having power over your future.
- Forgiveness frees you to receive what God has next for you.
- Forgiveness restores your ability to love people without walls.
- Forgiveness puts you back in alignment with God who forgave you for everything.

## QUESTIONS

1. Read Matthew 18:21–35 together:
  - a. What part of this parable hits you the hardest, and why do you think Jesus connects God's forgiveness of us so directly to our forgiveness of others?
2. Looking again at Matthew 18:32–35:
  - a. How do you think being "forgiven much" should practically change the way we respond to people who hurt us?

3. “Unforgiveness is not protecting you; it’s imprisoning you.”
  - a. Where have you seen that be true in your own life or in someone close to you?
4. Forgiveness is a decision first and a feeling that often comes later:
  - a. What would it look like, this week, to take one concrete step toward forgiving someone—even if your emotions aren’t there yet?

## PRACTICE

### Forgiveness

#### In-Meeting Practice

##### Guided Forgiveness Prayer

Have everyone sit quietly and close their eyes.

Ask the Holy Spirit: Is there anyone I need to forgive? Let a face or name come to mind.

Then have everyone say this short prayer (out loud together or quietly in their hearts):

“Jesus, thank you for forgiving me.

Today I choose to forgive [pause for them to say the name in their heart].

I release them into your hands.

Heal my heart and help my feelings catch up.

Amen.”

Afterward, ask 1–2 people (only if they want) to share:

“What was that like for you?”

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#### Weekly Practice (Homework)

##### Daily 30-Second Prayer

Have everyone do this once a day until you meet again:

Think of the same person.

Pray this simple prayer:

“Lord, I choose again to forgive [name].

I give you my hurt and my anger.

Bless them, and change my heart. Amen.”

Next week, we will open group by asking:

“What did you notice as you prayed that simple forgiveness prayer each day?”

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## CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, thank you that you have forgiven us far more than we will ever be asked to forgive others. By your Holy Spirit, give us the courage and power to release those who have hurt us and to walk in true freedom. Help our hearts, our thoughts, and our actions to grow more like yours this week.