



breakthroughs

**finding freedom and true
fulfillment in jesus**

Lesson 10: Forgiving Others

Last week we focused on God’s forgiveness and grace. Our focus for this week’s lesson will be on forgiving others.

For some, ‘accepting forgiveness’ is more challenging than extending forgiveness. For others, ‘extending forgiveness’ will feel next to impossible. We will learn this week that just as forgiveness is a gift from God, so is our ability to forgive others. God gives us His grace to forgive those who have hurt us and His grace is enough.

We will concentrate on one verse from the Bible this week as we learn how to forgive others through God’s grace. This verse is Ephesians 4:32 (NIV):

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

According to Ephesians 4:32 and what you learned in last week’s lesson, how do we forgive others?

Forgiving those who hurt us is a huge part of our healing and freedom. *When we don’t forgive people, the wounds in our hearts cannot heal.* We know that pain is often what leads us to follow ‘little gods,’ step into pits and build strongholds. For us to gain the emotional and spiritual strength that we need to continue to walk in the light, we must deal with any unforgiveness in our lives. This week’s lesson can be painful and difficult but the result is our healing and freedom. **Remember that God’s grace is enough.**

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If you need to take a moment to ask God to help you have faith and courage to do this week's lesson, then do that now.

Ephesians 4:32 tells us how we forgive others. We are to forgive others the same way that God forgave us.

How did God forgive us?

Hopefully your answer included that God forgave us through Jesus. Jesus paid the debt for our sins through His blood. We did not do anything to earn this gift of forgiveness. Our forgiveness is the gift of grace.

God tells us that we forgive others through the same grace that we received when He forgave us. We forgive others through the grace of the Cross. This way of forgiving others is nothing short of a miracle. God is telling us that He has made provision for us to forgive with the kind of forgiveness that He uses to forgive us. Jesus. We forgive others through the same amazing grace that we receive from the Cross, the forgiveness of our own sins. This is such great news for us, because we do not have the power within ourselves to forgive the people who have hurt us. If not for Christ giving us His grace to forgive, we would not be able to forgive.

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Summarize in your words what God is saying to you about the people that you need to forgive:

Perhaps you have been hurt deeply by someone and you don't want to forgive them. You may be feeling that they don't deserve your forgiveness. God knows your pain and He knows that you don't have what it takes to forgive them. This is another example of God's love for you and His provision for you, so that you can be free. God knows that if you don't forgive the ones who have hurt you that your heart will never be free of the pain, anger, bitterness and rage that their sin created when it entered your life. So, God made a way for you to forgive. His Name is Jesus.

What does it mean to forgive through Jesus Christ? Forgiving through Christ means that we ask Jesus to do something for us that we don't have the power to do apart from Him. We ask Jesus to give us His grace to forgive and then we forgive them. We may need to get on our knees and SAY OUT LOUD to God that we are angry and don't want to forgive, but we are choosing to forgive so that we can be free. If you have been hurt deeply, this will be painful, but God will help you, comfort you and give you His strength.

Forgiveness does not mean that you are saying that what a person did to hurt you was not wrong. When someone hurts us by sinning against us, it is wrong. Forgiving them of the offense does not change what happened, or make the offense any less offensive. Forgiveness is about releasing the person who hurt you from needing to 'say or do' anything to pay for the offense. Recall that when we sin, a payment had to be made for the sin to be forgiven. Jesus made that payment for us so that we can be freely forgiven for our sins. When we forgive someone, like God forgives us, we don't need anything from the person who hurt us in order for us to forgive them. In other

words, we freely forgive them. Forgiving others in this way is exactly what God is telling us to do in Ephesians 4:32. **God is telling us to forgive without demanding anything in return.**

SPECIAL NOTE: I would love to look you in the eye and tell you that I am so sorry for the pain that you feel. The person or people who have hurt you should not have hurt you. You did not deserve to be hurt and it was never God's will for someone to hurt you. Your Heavenly Father sees your pain and He knows what you have gone through. His heart hurts for you and for what was done to you. Forgiving the person that hurt you will never make what happened to you okay. It is not okay. Forgiving the person who hurt you is letting go of the offense and giving it completely over to God. It is releasing the person to God and letting go of the offense. As you forgive, God will begin to heal you of the pain this person caused in your life. He will begin taking away the pain and anger and replacing it with His grace.

When we have pain in our lives we will seek comfort to help us deal with it. When people hurt us, and we don't forgive them, it causes that pain to grow. **Unforgiveness can spread like a cancer and leave us feeling bitter and angry at the world.**

Consider your own heart. Do you struggle with feeling angry and bitter? Do you think that unforgiveness has spread throughout your own heart?

This next assignment is one that will result in tremendous healing and freedom. It will take some time, so you may want to work on it more than one sitting over the next week or weeks. Ask God to help you make a list of the people you need to forgive, and make a list of the things that hurt you that you need to forgive each person of doing (or not doing). There is space at the end of this chapter for your list.

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After you make the list, ask God to help you forgive each person and forgive each offense. You may want to use a prayer similar to this:

God, I do not have what it takes to forgive _____ for hurting me. I ask You to help me forgive _____ for _____
(list things they did that hurt you). You said to forgive as you forgave me through Christ. I forgive _____ through the power and grace of Christ. I release _____ to You and I let go of any expectation or need for them to do anything to make things right. I do not need them to do anything for me to receive freedom and healing. I look to You, and ask for You to heal my heart and free me from the pain they have caused in my life. I completely forgive _____ in the name of Jesus, Amen.

The space provided on the next page is for you to make a list of people you need to forgive. Include next to the person's name what you specifically need to forgive them for doing (or not doing). It will help to write these things down but when you pray and forgive them please pray aloud to God. Go someplace where you can be alone with God and feel the freedom to express any hurt or anger that you have about what the person did to hurt you. God tells us in **Psalm 62:8, "Trust in Him at all times, O People; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge."** This means that we can pour out the good and the bad and our hearts are safe with Him. God wants to take the pain and anger from our hearts, but we have to give it to Him.

Stepping into Forgiveness leads to freedom, but it can be emotionally draining. Making a list of our sins that we need to confess and forgiving those who have hurt us is very difficult. You may feel emotionally drained after walking through this week's lesson. Give yourself permission to rest after completing such hard emotional work. You are doing a great job. Take time to recognize what God is doing in you and the changes He is already making in your life. Healing and forgiveness takes time. As God allows pain and/or sin to surface in the weeks, months, years ahead, this path can be traveled again. God will continue to heal and free us throughout our lives.

*Please see list on the following page.

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People I Need To Forgive

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Notes
