



Forgiven

Forgiveness is key in the life of a Christian for many reasons. This week we will look at why forgiveness is so important.

Day 1 // Sin Ruins Our Relationship with God. Forgiveness Restores.

God created us to have a relationship with Him. God's plan was for us to walk and talk with Him like Adam and Eve in Genesis 2 and 3. However, when they sinned and disobeyed God, their relationship with God changed. Sin entered the world and there began the need for forgiveness to be granted for relationship with God to be restored.

God wasn't surprised by their sin. In fact, God already had a plan to forgive sins. A sacrifice would be made, blood would be shed, forgiveness obtained, and relationship restored. In the Old Testament animals were sacrificed regularly as people acknowledged their sin and asked God for forgiveness. In the New Testament, this was achieved once and for all, through the death and resurrection of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16 (NSV)

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8 (NSV)

Sometimes, it's easy for us to see the sin and wrongdoing in the lives of others and not ourselves. However, the Bible is clear...

“Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence.” Romans 3:23 (NSV)

Take a moment today to think about and acknowledge where there may be areas of sin in your life. God eagerly desires to have a relationship with you. If you are a Christian already, He desires a deeper relationship with you. As you acknowledge your sin, ask God for forgiveness, and accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ which was made for you. You can find forgiveness of sin and a restored (or new) relationship with God today.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, I thank you for loving me. I know I have sinned. I ask you to forgive me today. I receive your forgiveness for my sin and ask you Lord to walk with me today. Amen.

Day 2 // Sin Ruins Our Relationship with Ourselves. Forgiveness Restores.

Today, we don't often hear the word 'sin'. It's a word that people associate with the church and the Bible, but we rarely hear it used in everyday conversation about right and wrong. Sin takes on many forms like lying, stealing, adultery (another word we don't often use), murder, rebellion and disobedience to name a few.

When we sin, there are consequences. Yesterday we looked at how sin separates us from God. Today we will think about the affect our sin has on us. The author of the book of Hebrews writes:

“Pray for us, for our conscience is clear and we want to live honourably in everything we do.” Hebrews 13:18

God has placed within all of us the ability to know right from wrong. Our conscience enables us to identify right from wrong. However, in addition to this, as Christians the Holy Spirit teaches and guides us in the knowledge of right and wrong. Our conscience can be affected by our environment and the information and knowledge we give it. The Holy Spirit is the person of God who lives within us and guides us by God's Word.

When we sin, we can find ourselves with feelings of guilt, shame, or regret. When we try to hide our sin from others it often results in us sinning more by lying to cover up our sin. Thankfully, God's plan for forgiveness means that we do not have to carry those feelings with us.

“If we say that we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and refusing to accept the truth. But if we confess our sin to him, he can be depended on to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong. And it is perfectly proper for God to do this for us because Christ died to wash away our sins.” 1 John 1:8-9

Don't let yourself become weighed down by the fear of being found out, guilt or shame. Ask God to forgive you. Know that God loves and accepts you.

Prayer: Father God, thank you for loving me and forgiving me for my sin. I accept your forgiveness and no longer will live in fear, guilt, or shame. Amen.

No Longer Slaves by Bethel Music is a great song to remind you that God has chosen you to be his child.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8TkUMJtK5k>

The links below help to explain a little more about our conscience and the Holy Spirit:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCp4njifuc4>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7tdVwQvGTU>

Day 3 // Sin Ruins Our Relationships with Others. Forgiveness Restores.

One of the most well-known prayers is found in Matthew chapter six. It is the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples. Many may know the prayer and say the prayer, but do we really mean what we are saying?

As we look at the area on forgiveness this week, I am reminded of verse 12.

“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.” Matthew 6:12 NIV

“Forgive us the wrongs we have done, as we forgive the wrongs that others have done to us.” Matthew 6:12 GBT

Today our challenge is to forgive others for the wrong they have done to us. This may be easier said than done. In the verse above, Jesus gives us the instructions for how this is possible. With the forgiveness we ourselves have received from God; we can forgive others. Remember Romans 3:23 said, “All have sinned”. No one is perfect. We all need to receive forgiveness.

As we recognise our need for forgiveness, God can help us to forgive others who have hurt us.

Prayer: Father God, help me to forgive just as you have forgiven me for the things I have done wrong. Help me Lord to forgive others.

Forgiveness by Matthew West is a great song to listen to today.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1Lu5udXEZl>

Day 4 // Sin Ruins Our Relationships. Forgiveness Restores.

The story of Joseph in Genesis chapters 37-45 is a wonderful example of forgiveness. Why not take time this week to read the story of Joseph? You could list all the reasons Joseph had to hold on to unforgiveness and resent his brothers, Potiphar's wife, Potiphar, the Baker, the Butler. The list goes on of the offenses that took place in the life of Joseph.

What is so wonderful to see is Joseph's response to his brothers.

"Please come closer," he said to them. So, they came closer. And he said again, "I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into slavery in Egypt. But don't be upset, and don't be angry with yourselves for selling me to this place. It was God who sent me here ahead of you to preserve your lives."
Genesis 45:4-5 (NLT)

Wow! What a response! He asks them not to be upset. Joseph learnt what forgiveness means. It meant freedom! Letting go of bitterness, resentment, hatred, anger and recognising that God is ultimately in control of his life. Joseph was able to see that everything he went through, the good, the bad, and the ugly, God used to bring about His plan and purpose for Joseph's life.

"And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them."
Romans 8:28

Like Joseph, we may have experienced awful treatment at the hands of others, even those within our own family! Will you choose to forgive?

Prayer: Lord God, you know the things I have experienced in my life. Please help me Lord, to forgive those who have done wrong to me. Help me to let go of anger, bitterness and resentment and walk in love, peace, and forgiveness. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Day 5 // Forgiveness Frees You

The Bible talks in Acts of a remarkable man called Stephen. His story is found in Act chapters 6 and 7. Stephen was one of seven men chosen to serve because he was well respected and full of the Spirit and wisdom. In Acts 6:5 we read “Stephen (a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit)”.

“Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power, performed amazing miracles and signs among the people.” Acts 6:8

The reason why I wanted to finish this week looking at Stephen’s life is because Stephen was doing all the right things. He loved God. He served the believers. He was full of the power of God and yet Stephen was arrested. People lied about him and ultimately, Stephen was martyred for his faith.

“As they stoned him, Stephen prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” He fell to his knees, shouting, “Lord, don’t charge them with this sin!” And with that, he died.” Acts 7:59-60

What a powerful picture of forgiveness! Even in dying after being falsely accused, Stephen refuses to hold onto unforgiveness. He releases those who have wronged him and asks God to do the same.

Forgiving others frees us from sin. Holding onto unforgiveness is disobedience to God and therefore sin. When asked how many times we should forgive in Matthew 18:21-22, Jesus answered “Not seven times, but seventy-seven times.” We are to walk in forgiveness daily. Keep short accounts of wrongdoing. Be quick to forgive those who have wronged you. Also, be quick to ask for forgiveness from those you have wronged. This is the example Jesus has set us and the example we must follow to find freedom in forgiveness.

Prayer: Father God, thank you for forgiving my sin. Help me Lord to walk in forgiveness before you and with others. Help me to find the freedom that is available through you as I learn to forgive others just as you have forgiven me. Amen.