



2

Loving and Forgiving Well



HOW CAN WE MAKE FORGIVENESS A REGULAR RHYTHM IN OUR LIVES?

The POINT >

We pray for and forgive others, following the example of Jesus.

> MATTHEW 5:43-48

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”





THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

According to research, cleaning the toilet was the most disliked household chore for 41.6% of Americans.¹



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // JESUS

Jesus teaches us the importance of biblical forgiveness—loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute us.

Forgiveness is not a popular topic. When we hear the word *forgiveness*, it may rank way down at the bottom of the list with unenjoyable things like doing chores or completing a homework assignment. It's something we know we should do, and we know it's truly best for us, but we honestly just don't want to do it. Well, at least when it comes to offering forgiveness to others, that is!

Offering forgiveness to others is difficult because often they have hurt us in some way. Maybe they hurt us physically or hurt our feelings and pride, or maybe what they did just made us angry. Many times, we can feel as if others are undeserving and unworthy of our forgiveness, especially if they never acknowledge the hurt and pain they caused. Jesus gives us the command not only to offer forgiveness to others but also to offer unlimited forgiveness. How is this possible? We will explore Jesus' words and dive deep into forgiveness to learn how to make it a reality.

MATTHEW 5:43-44

1 Read Psalm 13. How did David feel, what did he recall being true, and what did he decide to do?

2 Why is it important to obey God's command to forgive and pray for those who have wronged us?

MATTHEW 5:45-47

3 Why does Jesus ask us to forgive and pray for those who have wronged us?

4 How does loving and forgiving our enemies reflect God's character and bring Him glory?

5 How can we practically accomplish this difficult task of loving and forgiving our enemies?

We are called to be imitators of Christ and reflect God's image and likeness. #BSFLStudents HowtoLiveWell

MATTHEW 5:48

6 What does Jesus mean when He says that we must be perfect like our heavenly Father is perfect?

7 Where do we start? How do we begin to live perfectly like Christ?

8 How does forgiveness flow from our efforts toward Christlike perfection?





LIVE IT OUT



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // JESUS

Jesus teaches us the importance of biblical forgiveness—loving our enemies and praying for those who persecute us.

Forgiveness is difficult. It's tough for us as adults; it's tough for our students. In a broken and fallen world, helping our students see the importance of forgiveness in the life of a believer can be unimaginable at times. What can help is reminding students that Jesus forgives us, and since He forgives us, we can forgive others.

Please keep in mind students' emotions on the subject of forgiveness, as some may have or are walking through challenging life circumstances. Point students to Scripture and allow them to see how important forgiveness is to Jesus.

>CHRIST

9 How does forgiveness model a Christlike perspective and actions?

10 Why does Jesus ask us to love and forgive others, even our enemies?

GOD

JESUS

HOLY SPIRIT

BIBLE

SALVATION

CREATION

CHURCH

PEOPLE

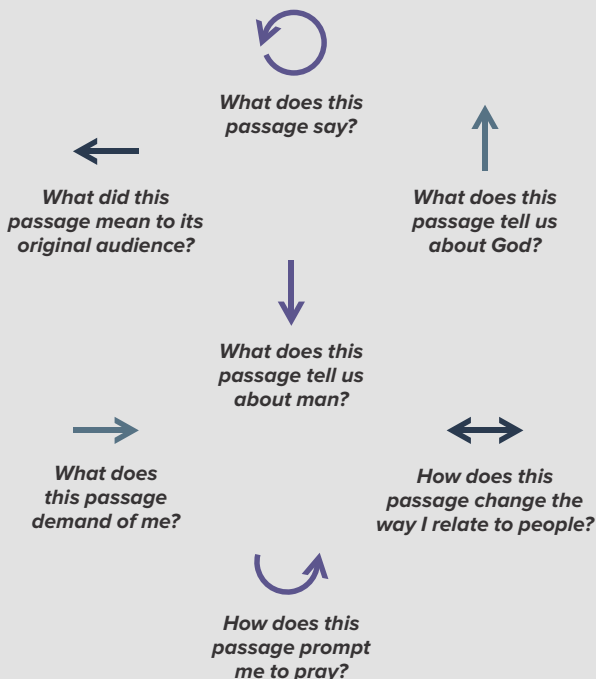
FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One 1 JOHN 1:9

Forgiveness is not just an expectation that God set for us. Forgiveness is in God's DNA; it's who He is. God offers forgiveness for all who have confessed their sin and believed in Him by putting their faith and trust in Him as Lord of their life. This passage explains that He is faithful and just to forgive our sins. We can count on Him to forgive each and every sin and cleanse us from every ounce of unrighteousness.

When we are called to forgive others, it's in God's likeness by reflecting His faithful and merciful character. God isn't asking us to do something impossible or something that He can't or won't do Himself. In His perfection, He offers complete and eternal forgiveness through the work of Jesus on the cross.

- **How does knowing that God will forgive all your sin encourage you to offer forgiveness to others?**
- **How could 1 John 1:9 be helpful to share with those struggling with guilt over wrong things they have done?**

Day Two

EPHESIANS 1:7



Where does forgiveness come from, and how should it influence our motivation to forgive? First, the verse says that we have redemption through Jesus' blood. Redemption includes forgiveness of sin and the restoration of holiness before God and a right relationship with Him. This redemption is a gift, not through our own efforts and abilities but through the sacrificial blood of Jesus making us clean, pure, and holy. We are completely forgiven!

Secondly, we see that forgiveness and redemption are given because of the riches of His glory. Because His glory is abounding, He can offer forgiveness and redemption. It comes from His glory and grace for His glory! As we strive to live like Christ and forgive like Him, let's remember that if we are in Christ, He is in us through the Holy Spirit. The riches of His glory are at work in us, waiting to flow through us.

- **Where does the ability to forgive come from?**
- **How should God's forgiveness influence our motivation and ability to forgive?**

Day Three

PSALM 103:8-12

The Lord is merciful and gracious. He is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Psalm 103:12 (CSB) says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us." We have seen that God is a God of forgiveness, mercy, and redemption, but how long will it last? Will He bring up our past mistakes to show us just how bad and sinful we really are? David tells us in this psalm that when God forgives us, He removes our sin as far as it can possibly be removed. There is unlimited forgiveness found in Christ, just like the unlimited distance between the east and the west.

If we are a child of God, He will not remember our sin—not from last year, today, or tomorrow. It has been truly, completely, and forever forgiven through the work of Christ.

- **If God offers unlimited forgiveness, what does this say about Him and the work of Christ?**
- **How should this passage influence the way we offer forgiveness to others as Jesus commands?**

Day Four

MATTHEW 18:21-22

We know that God calls us to forgive others. We also know that if we believe and confess Him as Lord, God forgives all our sins through the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross. In this passage, Jesus instructs us to forgive without limits. While forgiving someone once or twice (or even seven times) may seem practical, graceful, and merciful, Jesus says it should be more like seventy-seven times. It's a lot of times—unlimited forgiveness!

The key to obeying this command lies in the realization that forgiveness is not necessarily for the wrongdoer's benefit. In fact, it isn't even necessarily for our benefit, although it does provide mental relief. Rather, forgiveness reveals God's character and love through our actions. Unlimited forgiveness allows God's light to shine through us and bring Him glory.

- **Why is it important that we see forgiveness for Christ's sake and not simply for those who offend us or our own benefit?**

- **Consider someone who has recently offended you. How could you reflect God's character in this situation?**

Day Five

COLOSSIANS 3:13



We have looked at several verses that illustrate God's forgiving character and the magnitude of His grace offered to us. Although we are not the perfect image and likeness of God in this world since we are sinful people, God has shown His mercy and forgiveness to us by sending His Son, Jesus, to offer us a restored relationship with Him and to mold us into His image and likeness.

In the same merciful manner, "Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive" (v. 13, CSB). Throughout Scripture, we see example after example of God's forgiveness and His command for us to offer forgiveness. As we strive to become more like Christ, we must remember to allow the Spirit to work within us and be quick to offer forgiveness to others.

- **How do we see God's perfection and character in forgiveness?**

- **What can we learn about God by understanding His forgiveness and expectation for us to forgive?**