

Writing Love: *Forgiveness and Healing*

The Daily Devotional for September 15: Bringing the Hurt to God

Reading: Psalm 55:1-2, 16-18 -- A prayer in which the psalmist cries out to God in distress, expressing anguish and the longing to be heard, yet affirming trust that God will answer and bring peace.

Devotional: Forgiveness rarely begins with a feeling. It begins with honesty. Before we can move toward releasing someone who has hurt us, we must first tell the truth about the wound. God does not require us to arrive in prayer already healed. He invites us to come as we are -- angry, grieving, confused, or exhausted. The psalmist models this beautifully, bringing raw anguish directly to God without pretense. If you are carrying a hurt today, resist the urge to minimize it. Name it. Speak it. God can handle the full weight of what you feel. That honesty is where healing begins.

Reflection: What hurt have you been reluctant to fully acknowledge, even to yourself? Bring it to God today without editing it.

Practical Application: Write a short, honest prayer describing exactly what you feel. Do not try to make it sound spiritual. Simply tell God the truth.

The Daily Devotional for September 16: God in the Middle

Reading: Exodus 14:19-20 -- The angel of God and the pillar of cloud move to stand between the Israelites and the pursuing Egyptian army, separating and protecting God's people through the night.

Devotional: The Israelites had escaped Egypt, yet Egypt was still chasing them. This is what unresolved hurt often feels like -- we have left the situation, but the situation has not completely left us. The memory loops. The wound resurfaces. And yet, the story of the Exodus reveals something profound: God does not wait for the danger to pass before showing up. He moves into the middle of it. He places himself between his people and what pursues them. Whatever is chasing you today -- grief, bitterness, an old wound -- God is not watching from a distance. He is present, standing in the space between you and the pain.

Reflection: In what area of your life do you need to recognize that God is already standing in the middle of the situation?

Practical Application: Identify one fear or recurring hurt that feels like it is "catching up" with you. Pray specifically, asking God to stand between you and that thing today.

The Daily Devotional for September 17: The Mathematics of Mercy

Reading: Matthew 18:21-35 -- Peter asks Jesus how many times he must forgive someone who sins against him, and Jesus responds with a parable illustrating the radical, uncountable nature of mercy.

Devotional: Peter came to Jesus looking for a number, a clear boundary where his obligation to forgive would end. Jesus responded not with arithmetic but with a way of life. The parable of the unforgiving servant is uncomfortable precisely because it holds up a mirror. We have all stood in the place of the servant who needed mercy desperately and received it. The question Jesus presses into us is whether that mercy has changed how we live. Forgiveness is not a transaction. It is not excusing wrong or pretending harm did not occur. It is a slow, sometimes painful reorientation of the heart toward the grace we ourselves have been given.

Reflection: Where in your life have you received mercy that you have not yet allowed to shape how you treat someone else?

Practical Application: Think of one person toward whom forgiveness feels impossible. Pray for them today -- not for their sake alone, but so that mercy can begin doing its work in you.

The Daily Devotional for September 18: Permission to Grieve What Was Lost

Reading: Lamentations 3:19-24 -- The writer honestly names deep grief and bitterness, yet turns to remember God's steadfast love and faithfulness, finding hope not in changed circumstances but in God's unchanging character.

Devotional: Not every broken relationship can be repaired. Not every wound will receive the apology it deserves. Some people we have loved are no longer living. Some friendships have faded beyond recovery. Some family dynamics have been permanently altered by illness, addiction, or choices beyond our control. Forgiveness in these situations does not look like resolution. It often looks like grief. Grief for what was lost, for what never came, for what we hoped a relationship would be. The writer of Lamentations does not skip the grief. He sits in it fully before turning toward hope. Grief is not the absence of faith. It is part of the honest journey toward it.

Reflection: Is there a relationship or a loss you have not yet allowed yourself to fully grieve? What would it mean to grieve it honestly before God?

Practical Application: Set aside quiet time today to acknowledge something you have lost -- a relationship, an expectation, a version of someone you loved. Let yourself grieve it, and then read Lamentations 3:22-23 as a closing prayer.

The Daily Devotional for September 19: Writing Something New

Reading: Isaiah 43:18-19 -- God calls his people not to dwell on the former things, declaring that he is doing something new, making a way in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

Devotional: Forgiveness does not erase the past. It does not pretend the wound was acceptable or that the relationship is automatically restored. What it does is refuse to let the hurt write the final chapter. God speaks through Isaiah to a people who have known real suffering and real loss, and he does not minimize what they have been through. He simply declares that he is not finished. There is still something new being written. Your story is not defined by the person who hurt you, the relationship that broke, or the wound that has not yet healed. God's love for you is not finished. It is still being written every day. Take the next step faithfully.

Reflection: What would it look like for you to take one faithful step forward, not because the hurt is gone, but because your life, your peace, and your future still matter?

Practical Application: Write down one thing you want to release and one thing you want to move toward. Offer both to God in prayer, trusting that he is making a way even now.