



CORNER FRINGE MINISTRIES

FREEDOM IN MESSIAH

Student Guide | Week 9 | The Debt Release Worksheet

The Bitter Water at Marah

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

Unforgiveness is not a moral failing — it is a prison. The cruelest part is that the person imprisoned is not the one who did the harm, but the one who was harmed.

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

LAST WEEK

We separated the voice of the accuser from the voice of God. We learned that condemnation moves you away from God and conviction moves you toward Him. We declared that there is now no condemnation for those in Messiah.

THIS WEEK

We deal with the hardest act of securing freedom in Messiah: forgiving the person who doesn't deserve it. We don't forgive because the other person earned it, but because we were made for more than a life defined by what someone else did.

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY ANCHOR

"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Messiah also has forgiven you."

Ephesians 4:32 | LSB

A THOUGHT TO CARRY THROUGH THE WEEK

Moses did not drink the bitter water or argue with the people grumbling at him. He brought the bitterness to God — and God showed him a tree. He threw it in. And the bitter water became sweet.

That is the pattern of forgiveness. You don't resolve bitterness by managing it better or by convincing yourself the offense didn't matter. You bring it to God, and He does the work of transformation that you cannot do for yourself.

This week is about that act. Not the feeling of forgiveness, but the decision to forgive.

RELEVANT THOUGHTS THAT CAME TO MIND DURING THE WEEK:

BREAKOUT SESSION

Week 9 | *The Debt Release Worksheet*

Total time: 60 minutes | No facilitator needed — follow the steps

HOW THIS WORKS

There is no leader in this group — everyone follows the steps together. Each step has a time guide. Stay with the step you are on. If someone in the group needs more time on a particular step, the group can choose to continue with it. The structure serves the people, not the other way around. The goal is not to get through all of the steps. The goal is that each person in the group leaves having done real work and no member of the group leaves feeling left behind.

Open your session with prayer. Let the Spirit guide one of you to begin.

STEP 1 LAND THE TEACHING 8–10 minutes

Someone in the group reads this aloud before anyone responds:

This week the teaching confronted us with one of the most honest questions in the curriculum: Is there a person whose memory still has power over your present? Israel stood three days removed from the greatest miracle they had ever seen — and they were bitter toward Moses. Bitterness has a name in Hebrew. Marah. It is not just an emotion. It is a place where you can take up residence. Peter asked Yeshua how many times he should forgive — thinking seven was generous. Yeshua said seventy times seven. He was not doing math. He was saying: Stop counting. Forgive completely. Because the person who is counting offenses is still living inside the offenses and not in freedom.

Take 2 minutes of silence. Let each person answer this question privately before anyone speaks:

Is there a person whose name — or whose memory — still has the power to change your mood or pull you back into a story you have told yourself a thousand times? Don't name the person publicly, but consider the costs of unforgiveness — in peace, in your closest relationships, and in your walk with God. Name these costs out loud.

My honest answer to Step 1:

Now go around the group. Let each person share his or her answer as honestly as possible. No cross-talk while someone is sharing. When everyone has spoken, move to Step 2.

STEP 2 GO DEEPER TOGETHER 20–25 minutes

This is the heart of the session. The question is harder than Step 1. It requires more honesty. Take 2 minutes of silence before anyone speaks — let each person sit with their thoughts privately first.

This tool names the unforgiveness you are holding and guides your conscious decision to release it. Forgiveness is not a feeling—it is a decision. Today that decision becomes concrete.

Step A: Name the person or people you have not forgiven and their specific offense(s) against you. Vague forgiveness does not produce genuine release. The more specific you are, the deeper the release will be.

Step B: Name what holding onto the debt has cost you. This is not intended to amplify bitterness, nor should you let it. This is designed to help you understand the consequences of unforgiveness.

Step C: Write your declaration of release. This is the conscious act of forgiveness. Understand that forgiving those who have offended you doesn't necessarily lead to an immediate feeling of release.

Note: If you cannot yet sign the declaration, write the honest sentence: "I am not ready yet, but I am willing to become willing." That is the beginning of the journey. Reach out for pastoral help completing it.

The person/people I am naming:	His or her specific offense:

What carrying these debts has cost me:

DECLARATION OF RELEASE:
I choose to release _____ from the debt of _____.
I am releasing this debt to God. I am no longer requiring payment. I am releasing myself from the prison of holding it.
Signed: _____ Date: _____

When you are ready, go around the group and let each person respond. The group listens fully before anyone else speaks. If someone in the group is particularly moved by this question — if the Holy Spirit is clearly doing something — let the group stay with that person. Do not rush past a real moment to stay on schedule. This is the most important work — what the time margin is for.

What would it mean to release the person(s) you've been holding — not because they deserve it, but because you were made for more than a life tethered to their actions? What is the first step of that release for you and what has kept you from taking it?

STEP 3 THE ROOT WORK 20-25 minutes

Take 2-5 minutes to complete the Root Question Framework privately and honestly. Write it down. The act of writing forces honesty in a way that thinking alone does not. If you're running out of time in your group, please skip ahead to the group discussion and complete this framework on your own later.

As you fill in the framework: The behavior may be the way you treat the person you are holding, or what you do when their name comes up. The feeling beneath it is likely anger, grief, or a sense of injustice. The lie beneath is something you believe about yourself or about God — you may even doubt justice will ever come. The truth is what God says about who you are and that He can be trusted to administer justice for what was done to you.

THE ROOT QUESTION FRAMEWORK	
Go deeper on what steps one and two surfaced.	
The behavior is:	What do I keep doing — or running to — that I know is not producing life?
The feeling is:	What does it feel like right before I go there? Shame? Fear? Emptiness? Loneliness?
The lie beneath is:	What must I believe about myself — or about God — for this to feel necessary?
The truth is:	What does God actually say about me in this place? (Use scripture if you can.)

After everyone has had time to write, go around the group. Each person shares what they wrote — as much or as little as they are ready to share. The group listens. No fixing, no advising, no jumping to solutions. Just witness what each person brings.

Use most of this time discussing and reflecting on the whole group's testimony:

GROUP REFLECTION

Moses brought the bitterness around him and inside him to God rather than feeding it himself. What would it look like practically for each of you to bring what you are carrying to God — rather than managing it, justifying it, or rehearsing it?

PREPARE TO SHARE

When you return to the main room, your group may be asked to share. Together, decide on one thing — one insight, one moment, one declaration — that represents what happened in your group today.

Complete this sentence as a group: “Forgiveness does not mean _____ — it means _____.”

Here’s what our group is taking away (write it down so you don’t lose it):

STEP 4 CLOSING PRAYER 2-5 minutes

Allow the Spirit to lead one person to close in prayer. Then go around the group — each person may pray one sentence if they are willing. No one is required to pray. No one is skipped over without grace.

Suggested focus: Pray the Memory Anchor back to God. In Messiah Yeshua’s name, choose to forgive the people who have wronged you — “those who spitefully use you and persecute you” — and ask God to help you “bless those who curse you and do good to those who hate you.” (Matthew 5:44)

One person closes the prayer when the group is ready.