



*Unraveling the Power and Freedom of  
Grace*

# **WALKING CHRISTIAN ON FORGIVENESS**

*Part 4 of 4*

*Barry G. Johnson, Sr.*

*Barry's Bureau*



## IV. GROWTH, PROGRESS AND MATURITY

A. Key Verse - Col. 3:13

B. Key Verse Read and ReRead Mat. 18:23–35

C. The Imperative of Releasing Resentment through Forgiveness

D. The Progressive Phases of Achieving Forgiveness

E. The Journey Towards True Forgiveness

F. Cultivating a Spirit of Continual Forgiveness

G. Strategies for Shielding Your Heart Against the Poison of Bitterness

H. The Art of Rebalancing and Lighten the Scales of Blame

I. The Conclusion of the Story



## IV. GROWTH, PROGRESS AND MATURITY

“Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

[\(Matthew 9:13\)](#)

### A. Key Verse

Engage in a moment of reflection if you have ever recited "the model prayer" or commonly known as "The Lord's Prayer." Consider the sincerity behind your words—did you truly intend them? Contemplate this: "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12) were the words of Jesus. If these words truly resonated with you, you are essentially requesting God's forgiveness to mirror the forgiveness that you have extended to those who have transgressed against you. This underlines why the Bible emphasizes,

“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”([Colossians 3:13](#))

## B. Key Passage to Read and Reread

### [Matthew 18:23-35](#)

#### THE PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

- The \_\_\_\_\_ represents our heavenly Father, who forgives all our debt of sin when we sincerely come to Him for forgiveness and mercy. vv., [23-27](#)
- The servant who had his debts removed was not willing to \_\_\_\_\_ the debts of another servant who sought forgiveness. vv., [28-30](#)
- If we don't extend true \_\_\_\_\_ to others, our Father in heaven will not forgive us. vv., [31-35](#)

"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." ([Matthew 18:35](#))

## C. The Imperative of Releasing Resentment through Forgiveness

#### GOD'S HEART ON FORGIVENESS

- **God commands** that we \_\_\_\_\_ each other.  
"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." ([Ephesians 4:32](#))
- **God wants** us to forgive others because He \_\_\_\_\_ us.  
"Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." ([Colossians 3:13](#))
- **God wants** us to see \_\_\_\_\_ as sin.  
"Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins." ([James 4:17](#))

- **God wants** us to get rid of unforgiveness and have a heart of \_\_\_\_\_.

“Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” ([Matthew 5:7](#))

- **God wants** us to do our part to live in \_\_\_\_\_ with everyone.

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” ([Romans 12:18](#))

- **God wants** us to overcome \_\_\_\_\_ with good.

“Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.” ([Romans 12:21](#))

- **God wants** us to be ministers of \_\_\_\_\_.

“God ... reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.” ([2 Corinthians 5:18–19](#))

## D. The Progressive Phases of Achieving Forgiveness

“Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself.”

([Leviticus 19:18](#))

### #1 \_\_\_\_\_ the Offense.

- **Don’t \_\_\_\_\_ the offense by thinking:** “No matter how badly he treats me, it’s okay.”

**TRUTH:** Bad treatment is not okay. There is no excuse for bad treatment of any kind—any time.

“Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.” ([Ephesians 5:11](#))

- **Don't \_\_\_\_\_ the offender's behavior by thinking:** "He doesn't mean to hurt me. I shouldn't feel upset with him—he's a member of my family!"

**TRUTH:** No matter the age of the offender or our relationship, we need to call sin "sin." We need to face the truth instead of trying to change it. There must first be a **guilty** party in order to have someone to forgive.

"Whoever says to the guilty, 'You are innocent'—peoples will curse him."  
([Proverbs 24:24](#))

- **Don't \_\_\_\_\_ that quick forgiveness is full forgiveness by thinking.** "As soon as that horrendous ordeal occurred, I quickly and fully forgave him. That's what I've been taught to do!"

**TRUTH:** Many well-intentioned people feel guilty if they don't extend immediate forgiveness, so they "forgive" quickly. Yet they have neither faced the full impact of the offense nor grieved over what happened. Rarely is the full impact of sin felt now it occurs. Rather, its impact is felt at different levels over a period. Therefore, forgiveness needs to be extended at each of these levels. "Quick forgiveness" over deep hurts may seem sufficient, but it is not "full forgiveness"—not until it has been extended at each level of impact. Before complete forgiveness can be extended, you must face the truth about the gravity of the offense and its extended impact on you.

"You [God] desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place." ([Psalm 51:6](#))

## #2 \_\_\_\_\_ the Offense.

"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven ... a time to love and a time to hate." ([Ecclesiastes 3:1, 8](#))

### **Failing to feel the offense results in ...**

- \_\_\_\_\_ **your pain:** "I don't blame her for always criticizing me.... She is under a lot of pressure ... and it doesn't hurt me."

**TRUTH:** Being mistreated by someone you love is painful. Feeling the pain must take place before healing can take place.

"The LORD is close to the broken hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." ([Psalm 34:18](#))

- \_\_\_\_\_ **false guilt:** "I feel guilty if I hate what was done to me. I'm never supposed to have hatred."

**TRUTH:** God hates sin. You too can hate sin. You are to hate the sin, but not the sinner.

"To fear the LORD is to hate evil; I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior and perverse speech." ([Proverbs 8:13](#))

### #3 \_\_\_\_\_ **the Offender.**

- **ARGUMENT:** "I don't think it is right to forgive when I don't feel like forgiving."

**ANSWER:** Forgiveness is not a \_\_\_\_\_ but is rather an act of the will—a choice. Jesus established what was right when He said,

"When you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." ([Mark 11:25](#))

- **ARGUMENT:** "I can forgive everyone else, but I don't have the power to forgive that person."

**ANSWER:** The issue is not your lack of \_\_\_\_\_ to forgive, but rather how strong God's power is within you to forgive any sin committed against you.

"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness." ([2 Peter 1:3](#))

- **ARGUMENT:** "Forgiveness isn't fair. She ought to pay for her wrong!"

**ANSWER:** God knows how to deal with each person fairly—and He will, in His \_\_\_\_\_ time.

"Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord." ([Romans 12:19](#))

- **ARGUMENT:** “I can’t keep forgiving—he keeps doing the same thing over and over.”

**ANSWER:** You cannot control what others do, but you can control how you \_\_\_\_\_ to what others do. Jesus said you are to respond with forgiveness no matter the number of times wronged. The apostle Peter asked Jesus,

‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.’ ([Matthew 18:21–22](#))

- **ARGUMENT:** “I cannot forgive and forget. I keep thinking about being hurt.”

**ANSWER:** When you choose to forgive, you don’t get a case of “holy amnesia.” However, after facing the hurt and confronting the offender, close off your mind to \_\_\_\_\_ the pain of the past. Forget about your pain. Refuse to focus on your hurt.

“Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.” ([Philippians 3:13–14](#))

#### #4 \_\_\_\_\_ **Oneness ... if appropriate.**

“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.” ([Philippians 2:1–2](#))

### **HONESTY REQUIRED FOR RECONCILIATION**

**H—** \_\_\_\_\_ evaluate yourself and your relationship.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” ([Psalm 139:23–24](#))

**O—** \_\_\_\_\_ your heart and share your pain.

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.” ([Matthew 18:15](#))

**N**— \_\_\_\_\_ *whether your offender takes responsibility.*

“Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.” ([2 Corinthians 7:10](#))

**E**— \_\_\_\_\_ *your offender to be completely truthful.*

“Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.” ([Proverbs 12:19](#))

**S**— \_\_\_\_\_ *appropriate boundaries for the relationship.*

“He who heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.” ([Proverbs 10:17](#))

**T**— \_\_\_\_\_ *time, cautiously think, and sincerely pray before you let your offender all the way back into your heart.*

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.” ([Proverbs 4:23](#))

**Y**— \_\_\_\_\_ *your heart to starting over.*

“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland.” ([Isaiah 43:18–19](#))

**Question:** “If I have forgiven a monetary debt, thus freeing a person from paying me back, does God still expect that person to repay the debt as a matter of integrity?”

**Answer:**



- **Debtor #1**

*A friend borrows \$100 from you and promises to pay you back in one month. But because of an accident, he becomes disabled and loses his job. He has no way of repaying the debt. If six weeks later you forgive your friend's debt, does the person still owe the debt?*

- **Debtor #2**

*A friend borrows \$100 from you and promises to pay you back in one month yet makes no effort to repay the money. After six months, you forgive the debt. Does he still owe the debt?*

“At the end of every seven years you must cancel debts.... Every creditor shall cancel the loan he has made to his fellow Israelite. He shall not require payment from his fellow Israelite or brother, because the LORD's time for canceling debts has been proclaimed.”

[\(Deuteronomy 15:1-2\)](#)

## **E. The Progressive Phases of Achieving Forgiveness**

### **HOW TO HANDLE “THE HOOK”**

“It is mine to avenge; I will repay.”

[\(Deuteronomy 32:35\)](#)

## **F. Cultivating a Spirit of Continual Forgiveness**

“If he [your brother] sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.” [\(Luke 17:4\)](#)

## HOW TO FORGIVE ... AGAIN

**F**— \_\_\_\_\_

"[Love] keeps no record of wrongs." ([1 Corinthians 13:5](#))

**O**— \_\_\_\_\_

"Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips."  
([Psalm 141:3](#))

**R**— \_\_\_\_\_

"Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs." ([Proverbs 10:12](#))

**G**— \_\_\_\_\_

"When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly." ([1 Peter 2:23](#))

**I**— \_\_\_\_\_

"Far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you."  
([1 Samuel 12:23](#))

**V**— \_\_\_\_\_

"The Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" ([Acts 20:35](#))

**E**— \_\_\_\_\_

"The Lord is full of compassion and mercy." ([James 5:11](#))

### **G. Strategies for Shielding Your Heart Against the Poison of Bitterness**

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." ([Matthew 5:44](#))

"Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing."

[\(1 Peter 3:9\)](#)

### HOW TO PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HURT YOU

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

[\(Galatians 5:22–23\)](#)

- “**Lord**, I pray that () will be filled with **the fruit of** \_\_\_\_\_ by becoming fully aware of Your unconditional love—and in turn will be able to love others.
- “**Lord**, I pray that () will be filled with **the fruit of** \_\_\_\_\_ because of experiencing Your steady joy—and in turn will radiate that inner joy to others.
- “**Lord**, I pray that () will be filled with **the fruit of** \_\_\_\_\_ —Your inner peace—and in turn will have a peace that passes all understanding toward others.
- “**Lord**, I pray that () will be filled with **the fruit of** \_\_\_\_\_ because of experiencing Your patience—and in turn will extend that same extraordinary patience to others.
- “**Lord**, I pray that () will be filled with **the fruit of** \_\_\_\_\_ because of experiencing Your kindness—and in turn will extend that same undeserved kindness to others.
- “**Lord**, I pray that () will be filled with **the fruit of** \_\_\_\_\_ because of experiencing the genuine goodness of Jesus—and in turn will reflect the moral goodness of Jesus before others.
- “**Lord**, I pray that () will be filled with **the fruit of** \_\_\_\_\_ because of realizing Your amazing faithfulness—and in turn will desire to be faithful to You, to Your Word, and to others.
- “**Lord**, I pray that () will be filled with **the fruit of** \_\_\_\_\_ because of experiencing Your gentleness—and in turn will be able to be gentle with others.

- “**Lord**, I pray that ( ) will be filled with **the fruit of \_\_\_\_\_**—the control by Christ of self—and in turn will rely on His control for enablement to break out of bondage and to be an example before others.

*In the name of Jesus, I pray. Amen.”*

“The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.”

*([James 3:17](#))*

**Question:** “How can I release the bitterness toward my offender, who is now dead?”

**Answer:**

“See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

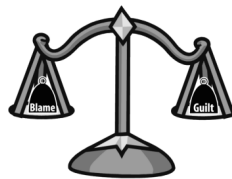
*([Hebrews 12:15](#))*

## **H. The Art of Rebalancing and Lighten the Scales of Blame**

### **PLAYING THE BLAME GAME**

“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.”

*([1 John 1:8](#))*



***Offender feels justified.***

## ENDING THE BLAME GAME

"I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man."

([Acts 24:16](#))



***Blame is lifted when sin is forgiven.***



***True freedom is found when scales are empty.***

### ***I. The Conclusion of the Story***

Jesus would never tell you to "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you" ([Luke 6:27](#)) without giving you the power to do it. And Corrie ten Boom was living proof of this love until her death in 1983. Perhaps no words reflect Corrie's heart of forgiveness and life of love more than these: "My brothers, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you" ([Acts 13:38](#)).