

# HOW TO FORGIVE WHEN IT STIL HURTS

A CHRISTIAN ROADMAP TO  
HEALING FROM DEEP BETRAYAL  
AND EMOTIONAL PAIN



## DBA MINISTRIES

# How to Forgive When It Still Hurts

A Christian Roadmap to Healing from Deep Betrayal and Emotional Pain

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- Daily declarations: "I release them. I bless them."
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- Monthly: Symbolic act of closure (e.g., burn the letter, plant something new)

# Introduction: When Forgiveness Feels Impossible

The text message stared back at me from my phone screen, each word a fresh wound: "I never really loved you. There's someone else."

Maybe your moment looked different. Perhaps it was the friend who betrayed your deepest secret, the parent who chose addiction over you, or the church leader who shattered your trust. Whatever form it took, I know this: somewhere in your story, someone left you bleeding.

And now, well-meaning Christians keep telling you to "just forgive."

As if forgiveness were as simple as flipping a switch. As if you could just decide not to feel the knife still lodged between your ribs. As if the mere mention of their name didn't make your stomach churn and your hands clench into fists.

If you've picked up this book, chances are you already know you're supposed to forgive. You've heard the sermons. You've read Matthew 6:14-15 until the words blur together. You understand, intellectually, that unforgiveness is poisoning your soul. But understanding and doing? Those are two vastly different mountains to climb.

Here's what I need you to know before we take another step together: **God doesn't expect you to pretend it doesn't hurt.**

## The Hidden Cost of Unforgiveness

Right now, unforgiveness might feel like your shield—the only thing protecting you from being hurt again. But what if I told you it's actually your prison?

That person who wounded you? They've likely moved on with their life. Meanwhile, you're the one lying awake at 2 AM, replaying conversations, imagining confrontations, feeling your heart race with fresh anger over old wounds. You're the one who tenses up when you see someone who merely *resembles* them. You're the one whose prayers feel like they're bouncing off the ceiling because there's a wall of bitterness between you and God.

Unforgiveness doesn't punish them. It punishes you.

It shows up in ways you might not even recognize:

- That inability to fully trust in new relationships
- The way you sabotage good things because you're waiting for betrayal
- How you hold pieces of yourself back, even from God
- The exhaustion of carrying offense like a backpack full of stones

- That nagging sense that you're stuck, unable to move forward into the fullness of God's plan

## Why This Journey Matters Now

You might wonder why forgiveness matters so much to your spiritual journey. After all, can't you just avoid that person and move on? Can't time heal all wounds?

But here's the truth that changed everything for me: **Unforgiveness is the single greatest blocker to intimacy with God and breakthrough in your purpose.**

Jesus didn't make forgiveness a suggestion. He made it a command. Not because He's harsh, but because He knows what harbored hurt does to His children. It calcifies around your heart. It clouds your spiritual vision. It clogs the very channels through which His love and power flow.

Every destiny-defining moment in scripture came after someone chose radical forgiveness:

- Joseph forgave his brothers and saved nations
- David forgave Saul and inherited a kingdom
- Stephen forgave his murderers and ushered Saul into Paul

What breakthrough is waiting on the other side of your forgiveness?

## What You'll Discover in These Pages

This isn't another book that will shame you for struggling to forgive. Instead, through seven biblical principles and the raw, real stories of believers who've walked this path before you, you'll discover:

- Why forgiveness is a *command*, not a feeling—and how to obey even when everything in you resists
- How to release the offender without releasing the need for justice
- The surprising truth about Jesus and emotional wounds (spoiler: He gets it more than you think)
- Why forgiveness doesn't always mean reconciliation—and when boundaries are biblical
- How the enemy uses bitterness as a strategic weapon against your purpose
- The daily practice of forgiveness when old wounds resurface
- Why forgiving yourself might be the missing piece

You'll meet Corrie ten Boom, standing face-to-face with her Nazi torturer. Joyce Meyer, choosing to forgive the father who stole her innocence. Jackie Hill Perry, finding healing from family rejection. T.D. Jakes, nearly derailed by ministry betrayal. Each story is a testament to this truth: **When we forgive the unforgivable, we experience the impossible.**

## A Different Kind of Healing

I won't lie to you. This journey isn't easy. There will be moments when you'll want to close this book and choose the familiar ache of unforgiveness over the unknown territory of release.

But I promise you this: On the other side of forgiveness lies a freedom you can't imagine from where you're standing now.

Peace that doesn't depend on apologies you'll never receive. Joy that isn't held hostage by someone else's choices. Purpose that isn't derailed by past pain. Relationships unmarred by the shadows of old wounds. Prayers that reach heaven without the interference of bitterness.

Most importantly, you'll discover a Savior who doesn't just command forgiveness—He empowers it. A God who doesn't minimize your pain but transforms it. A Holy Spirit who doesn't expect perfection but partners with you in the process.

## **Your Invitation to Freedom**

This book includes a 90-day forgiveness and healing plan, because lasting freedom doesn't happen overnight. It happens one choice, one prayer, one act of release at a time. Together, we'll walk through the daily work of untangling the roots of bitterness and planting seeds of grace.

But it starts with a decision. Not a decision to feel differently—feelings will follow obedience in their own time. Rather, a decision to begin. To crack open the door of your heart, just an inch, to the possibility that you can forgive even when it still hurts.

That person who wounded you? They've taken enough. They've taken your peace, your trust, maybe even years of your life. Don't let them take your future too.

Your story doesn't end with what was done to you. It begins with what you choose to do next.

Will you choose freedom?

Turn the page. Let's begin.

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*"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." —Colossians 3:13*

# Chapter 1: Forgiveness Is a Command, Not a Feeling

The frail woman stood frozen in the church doorway, her weathered hands trembling against her worn Bible. Corrie ten Boom had preached this message of forgiveness a thousand times since her release from Ravensbruck concentration camp. She had traveled the world declaring God's forgiveness, teaching others to release their captors, to let go of the unthinkable.

But now, in a church basement in Munich, 1947, her message had taken flesh.

Walking toward her with an outstretched hand was one of them. A guard. Not just any guard—*that* guard. The one who had stood watch while she and her beloved sister Betsie were forced to strip naked for inspection. The one whose mocking eyes had watched their humiliation. The one who had been there when Betsie's body was thrown onto a pile of corpses like garbage.

"Fraulein, I have become a Christian," he said, his hand still extended. "I know that God has forgiven me for the cruel things I did there, but I would like to hear it from your lips as well. Fraulein, will you forgive me?"

Time froze. Corrie's blood turned to ice water in her veins. Forgive? This monster who had participated in Betsie's death? This man who represented everything evil that had stolen her family, her home, her dignity?

And in that moment, Corrie ten Boom discovered what every wounded heart eventually learns: **forgiveness is not a feeling. It's a command.**

## The Moment Everything Changes

Perhaps you've never stood in a concentration camp, but you've stood in your own moments of impossibility. That moment when:

- Your spouse admits to the affair
- Your parent chooses their addiction over you again
- Your best friend spreads the secrets you whispered in confidence
- Your business partner steals everything and disappears
- Your pastor, the one you trusted with your spiritual life, is exposed as a fraud

In these moments, forgiveness feels like the cruelest command God could give. How dare He ask this of us? Doesn't He see our pain? Doesn't He understand what they've taken from us?

But here's what I've learned from studying that basement in Munich: God never asks us to do what He hasn't already empowered us to accomplish. The command to forgive isn't cruel—it's the key to our freedom.

# Understanding the Command

Let's start with what might be the most challenging words Jesus ever spoke:

*"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."* — Matthew 6:14-15

I remember the first time those verses really sank in. I was 23, curled up on my apartment floor, sobbing over a betrayal that had shattered my world. My mentor had sat with me for hours, listening to my pain, validating my hurt. Then she gently opened her Bible to these verses.

"This isn't fair!" I wanted to scream. "How can God's forgiveness of me depend on my forgiveness of someone who isn't even sorry?"

But that's when she helped me understand: This isn't God being petty. This is God being protective.

## Why Forgiveness Is Non-Negotiable

God doesn't command forgiveness because He's indifferent to our pain. He commands it because He knows what unforgiveness does to His children. Consider what happens when we refuse to forgive:

### 1. Unforgiveness Chains Us to Our Worst Moments

When we refuse to forgive, we become prisoners of time, locked forever in the moment of our deepest wound. The offense happened once, but through unforgiveness, we relive it a thousand times. We become curators of our own pain museum, carefully preserving every detail of how we were wronged.

### 2. Unforgiveness Poisons Our Spiritual Well

Jesus knew that unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. It seeps into every area of our spiritual life:

- Our prayers feel hollow because we're harboring sin
- Our worship feels forced because bitterness has hardened our hearts
- Our service feels empty because we're serving from obligation, not overflow
- Our relationships suffer because we project old wounds onto new people