

## **THE FORGIVENESS PROJECT: Awaken to Forgiveness**

**April 4, 2021 Easter Sunday**

### **Week 1 Reading Plan**

#### Day 1

READ: [Romans 5:8](#)

REFLECT: In his sermon this week, Pastor Derek reminded us that our failures don't scare Jesus. In fact, Jesus CHOSE you, while you were still bondage to sin. How does this scripture help you lean into forgiveness offered to you through Jesus? How does this passage hit differently when you read it now?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Before you enter a time of prayer, take a minute to reflect on the current state of your heart/life. Are you holding onto shame? Is there an area of your life where you continue to choose what you know, rather than what Jesus has for you? Offer it up to Him. Find a quiet place in a comfortable room and get down on your knees, close your eyes, and put your hands palm up. Once you're in that posture, honestly offer up to Jesus your shame and regret. Say, "Jesus, I give you (whatever you're holding on to) and I'm ready to wake up and live in your forgiveness."

TAKE IT FURTHER!

LISTEN: Jennie Allen "Made for This" podcast, Season 6, Episode 1: Ashamed

REFLECT: According to this podcast, how can you fight shame? Which of the two ways to fight shame do you need to focus on this week?

PRAY: In your prayer time, ask God to guide your steps in fighting shame in your life. Pray that your heart would be open to what He has for you.

#### Day 2-

READ: [1 John 1:7-9](#)

REFLECT: According to Pastor Derek's sermon, one of the ways we can awaken to God's forgiveness is to face our sin. What does this passage say we ought to do about our sin? What happens when we confess our sin?

PRAY: Use your quiet time today as a time of confession. What sins do you need to bring before the Father so that you can walk in His light? Say something like, "Father, I want to live in the light of your forgiveness. Please forgive me for ...."

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: [Getting to the Heart of Atonement](#) from the Gospel Coalition

REFLECT: What stuck out to you in this article regarding atonement? Listen to the song [Forgiven](#) by Crowder. Reflect on what the word "forgiven" has meant in your life.

### Day 3

READ: [Acts 10:42-43](#)

REFLECT: In this passage, Peter, one of Jesus's disciples, is explaining the gospel, the good news, to some Gentiles. He's telling them what Jesus commanded him and the other disciples to do now that Jesus has ascended to Heaven. He's also sharing the core message of Jesus life, death, and resurrection. According to this passage, what is that message? What do we need to do to receive this forgiveness? Now that you've read this scripture, how has your perception changed about what's needed to receive Jesus's forgiveness?

PRAY: Use this prayer time as a time of thanksgiving. Thank and praise God for what is available to you through Jesus. Acknowledge how it's changed your life and thank Him for His sacrifice.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: [Dare to Feel Forgiven: Four Ways Into the Heart of God](#) from Desiring God

REFLECT: Which of the four ways into the heart of God resonated with you the most?

PRACTICE: As the article states, put into practice what it means to "exercise faith to look into the springs" and ask God to show you in a real and tangible way the "springs" of His heart.

### Day 4-

READ: [Psalm 40:11-17](#)

REFLECT: In the ESV Bible, this section of scripture is titled "My Help and My Deliverer". We live in a time when there are many other temptations to run to in times of pain and frustration. How does this passage illustrate what happens when we run to Jesus instead of the things of this world? How has He been your help and deliverer?

PRAY: Read this passage from Psalm again 40 and use it to guide you prayer.

### Day 5-

READ: [Hebrews 6:19](#)

REFLECT: The book of Hebrews seeks to teach us and show us how Jesus is greater than any person, leader, religious leader, etc that has ever lived or ever will live. Throughout this book the intended audience is encouraged to remain faithful to Jesus and his teachings no matter what may come. As we read this book thousands of years later, we can still find hope in the words passed on to us that Jesus is faithful and we can trust Him. Either in your Bible, or in a journal or piece of paper, underline or write down some key words in this passage that stand out to you. What do you think the phrases "sure and steadfast anchor of the soul" and "a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain" tell us about Jesus? How does this passage offer insight to what forgiveness in Jesus truly means?

PRAY & PRAISE: In your quiet time, listen to the song "[Hosanna](#)" by The Belonging Co (featuring Kari Jobe). Listen to the song and meditate on the words and spend some time worshipping and praising Jesus the King. He reigns forevermore and in Him you are loved, chosen, and forgiven. Praise you, Jesus!

## THE FORGIVENESS PROJECT: Forgiving Others

April 11, 2021

### Week 2 Reading Plan

#### Day 1

READ: [Matthew 18:21-35](#) and [Ephesians 4:32](#)

REFLECT: Jesus often taught using parables. Parables are stories with a point. What is the main point of the Unforgiving Servant in Matthew 18? How do other people's sins against me compare in relationship to my sins against God? What does God's forgiveness of me have to do with my forgiveness of others? Reflect and then write down any attitudes that are in your heart regarding a lack of willingness to forgive others.

Now, reflect on these: 1. I may think I deserve to be forgiven more than others do 2. I may think that the hurt I have suffered is greater than the hurt I have caused God. 3. I may be acting like God loves me more than he does others. Do any of these resonate with you?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Write down the first three things that come to mind when you ask the question, "How have I been hurt by others?" Now pray, ask God to show you if you have truly forgiven the people who have hurt you, or not. Ask God to show you His heart, confess your lack of forgiveness and ask Him to lead you in each step of forgiveness.

#### Day 2

READ: [Ephesians 4:25-27](#) and [4:29-32](#) and [5:1-2](#)

REFLECT: What is standing out to you the most from these verses? Why? What do you think the application of verse 26 is? How does holding on to anger (unforgiveness) give opportunity to the devil (vs. 26 and 27)? From the whole reading, what words are related to unforgiveness? What words are related to forgiveness?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: As you read the words that are related to unforgiveness, which one stands out as one you are most susceptible to? Now finish this sentence, "I am most susceptible to this when...." Fill in the spaces here. My \_\_\_\_\_ (Insert unforgiveness word from above) is most directed toward \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of a person). Prayer - Confess what has just been revealed to God. Ask Him to show you how to overcome these feelings and how to forgive.

#### TAKE IT FURTHER!

LISTEN: Listen to this episode from The Gospel Coalition podcast - "[Must we forgive those who sin against us, if they don't repent?](#)"

REFLECT: What did I gain from this podcast? What action do I need to take?

### Day 3

READ: [2 Corinthians 2:5-11](#)

REFLECT: According to vs 7, what could happen to a person if we refuse to forgive them? What could be the consequences of “excessive sorrow”? What actions come with forgiveness? (You should find at least two in this reading, but maybe you can think of more.)

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Name two or three people who have hurt you (Maybe you have forgiven them or maybe you are still working on forgiveness.) Spend time praying for them. If you know of any specific needs in their lives, pray for those needs. Pray for their well-being. If you know of a personal struggle, pray for their victory. Pray for their salvation or a stronger relationship with Christ. Pray that they would know the same forgiveness in Jesus that you have come to know. If the person has expressed sorrow for the way they have hurt you, pray that they be comforted and know God’s release from guilt.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: If you feel like forgiveness is letting go of justice, read this article from the Gospel Coalition-  
[“What Charleston Should Remind Us About Forgiveness and Justice”](#)

REFLECT: What stands out to you from this article? What “need for justice” do you need to give over to God?

### Day 4

READ: [Colossians 3:8-15](#)

REFLECT: Here’s a thought, “Certain character traits make forgiveness more natural and easier.” Let’s think about this reading as related to these character traits. Verses 8 and 9 talk about putting some things away (that is, get them out of your life). How easy or hard is it to get these things out of your life? Why? What practical steps would you take to do it? Verses 12 and 14 list a few things we should “put on”. How will each assist you in the work of forgiveness? What are practical steps you can take to put these things on? How do you “Let the peace of Christ rule in” their heart?

PRACTICE: Choose one of the “Put on” words that you think you need to grow in or learn more about (Vs. 12 and 14). Do a study on this word (Suggestions: Look up the dictionary definition, do a google search for other Bible passages with that word. Example: “What does the Bible say about meekness?”).

PRAY: Offer a prayer of praise recognizing the ways God has already begun the process of getting rid of some negative characteristics and adding good ones. Ask God to help you grow in the character quality that you have chosen to study.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

READ: Here’s a good article from the Gospel Coalition for any married couple! Guard against becoming bitter over the little things! [“3 Ways to Battle Bitterness Over Minor Offenses in Marriage”](#)

Day 5

READ: [1 John 4:7-21](#)

REFLECT: What most stands out to you from this passage today? What did you learn about God's love? What are the implications of a lack of love in us? How is this reading related to the topic of forgiving others?

PRAY: Make a list of ways you have experienced the love of God and spend time in praise and thanksgiving to God. Make a list of people that need to know the love of God (such as the people you are working on forgiving) and pray that they may know His love. Then ask God to show you ways that you can show that love.

PRACTICE: Brainstorm a list of ways you can show God's love to that person and make a plan to do at least one of them this week!

## THE FORGIVENESS PROJECT: Forgiving Yourself

April 18, 2021

### Week 3 Reading Plan

#### Day 1-

READ: [Colossians 2:13-15](#)

REFLECT: Think of God's forgiveness in terms of a courtroom - even though you have been found guilty, God says he won't count your sin against you. He transfers the death penalty you deserved to Jesus, and Jesus' innocence is transferred to you through faith. Therefore, forgiving yourself is believing in the power of the cross! What sins are you holding onto that you need to let go of? How do those sins hold you back from pursuing God more fully?

PRAY: Even though we are offered forgiveness for all of our sins, practicing confession is still a valuable tool to help us turn from our sins and be grateful for God's mercy. Today, pray and confess your sins (thought, word, and deed) to God. Praise him for nailing those to the cross.

#### TAKE IT FURTHER!

REFLECT: Not forgiving yourself often comes from the belief that, "I don't deserve forgiveness." That's actually true! We don't deserve God's forgiveness, and there's nothing we can do to earn it. Forgiving yourself is accepting God's unconditional love for you. Read [Psalm 103](#) and reflect on God removing your transgressions "as far as the east is from the west."

#### Day 2-

READ: [Galatians 1:13-17](#) and [Romans 8:26-30](#)

REFLECT: Have you ever heard a powerful testimony about how God used someone's broken past for His glory? God wants to use your past for his glory, too! He is not working *in spite of* your past, he is working *through* your past. What ways have you have seen God work through your past sins? How might God be calling you to reframe your past in order to use it for building His kingdom?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Pray and ask God to reveal a way that He has redeemed sin in your past that could help you bring the gospel to a specific person or group of people. Make a plan to actually share your story with that person/people.

#### TAKE IT FURTHER!

LISTEN: Listen to [See a Victory by Elevation](#)

Day 3-

READ: [2 Corinthians 5:16-21](#)

REFLECT: Guilt is feeling bad for what you've done. Shame is feeling bad for who you are. What does this passage say about who you are? How does being reconciled to Christ change the way you view your past? (To reconcile means to restore a relationship back to harmony)

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Letting go of shame allows us to realize and live in our identity as children of God. Use the following prompt to combat shame by challenging it with the truth of scripture that you know. Try to write out at least three "I am not" statements.

I am not \_\_\_\_\_. God says \_\_\_\_\_.  
(e.g., I am not hard to love. God says he delights in who I am and who he created me to be.)

Day 4-

READ: [Romans 7:15-25](#)

REFLECT: Paul wrote more books of the Bible than any other biblical author, and even he admitted to repetitive sin. His serial sins obviously did not disqualify him from experiencing God's grace or leading others to Christ. Which of your serial sins make you feel disqualified from God's grace or from advancing God's kingdom?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Now read [Romans 8:1-4](#). Praise God that he "has set us free in Christ Jesus." Ask him to show you how he wants you to live and walk according to his Spirit.

Day 5-

READ: [Ephesians 6:10-20](#)

REFLECT: What piece of armor do you need to put on to combat the sins that weigh you down? What piece of armor do you need to put on to combat the lies of shame? What does it mean to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might?

PRACTICE: Ask for accountability and prayer from a trusted friend to encourage you to put on the piece(s) of armor you identified above.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: [Why Can't I Forgive Myself?](#) from Craig Groeschel at Life Church

## THE FORGIVENESS PROJECT: Forgiving Enemies

April 25, 2021

### Week 4 Reading Plan

#### Day 1-

READ: [Luke 23:33-38](#)

REFLECT: What does it take to forgive someone who has hurt you? Do you think this is something we can do in our own power?

PRAY: Talk to God about who he wants you to forgive. Make a list of those you feel have hurt you. Then ask him to give you the Holy Spirit power to forgive them and give it to Him for healing.

#### Day 2-

READ: [Matt 5:43-47](#) , [Matt 6:14-15](#)

REFLECT: Jesus raises the bar by saying in His kingdom you should *LOVE* your enemies and *PRAY* for them. How does it make you feel to think about loving those you see as enemies? Jesus says doing these things will make us Sons of the Father in Heaven.

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Pray that God gives you the grace to lift up your enemies in prayer. Ask God to help you to love them as you pray for them.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

LISTEN: Bruce Carroll song "[Pray for my enemies](#)"

REFLECT: The lyric says, "In the name of Jesus anyone can change!" If we truly believe that we need to be praying for those that seem to be against us.

#### Day 3-

READ: [John 8:10-11](#)

REFLECT: Jesus asked the woman to point out her accusers. Does he forgive her and then excuse the behavior that brought her before him? Were any of the religious leaders right to condemn her, according to Jesus' words? Did Jesus have the right to condemn her? How does Jesus respond to her?

PRAY: Pray that God helps you give up the grudge you hold against someone. Know that forgiving them does not excuse the behavior and there are always consequences regardless of forgiveness. It says in Galatians 6:7, "*Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap.*"



Day 4-

READ: [Matt 18: 21-22](#)

REFLECT: What does Jesus say about how many times to forgive a person? How many times do we need to be forgiven for our reoccurring sins against others, even those we love? How many times should we forgive others?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Thanks God for his forgiveness through Jesus. Pray again asking for God's grace to forgive others as He has forgiven you.

TAKE IT FURTHER!

WATCH: [The power of forgiveness](#) from RightNow Media. [Need a *free* RNM account? Visit this [link](#) or text GraceChurchPA to 49775 to register today.]

REFLECT: Think about where the focus should be in our lives- on ourselves or on Christ?

Day 5-

READ: [Luke 6: 27-28](#), [Rom 12: 18-21](#), and [1 Peter 3: 9-10](#)

REFLECT: How is it possible that you can love your enemies? How can you possibly do good? How can you possibly pray for them?

PRAY/ PRACTICE: Start by listing those you see as enemies and praying simple prayers for them. Then ask God for the power of his Holy spirit to help you to forgive them. With God's grace find a way that you can bless them. It may take time to get to this point, but don't give up the journey! Allow God to change your heart.