

DAY 6

PSALM 32:1, NLT

Imagine being able to deadlift over 1,000 pounds. That's what Brian Shaw, a famous weightlifter, did. The bar was basically bending in half under the weight as he lifted it. Can you imagine how heavy that must have felt? His muscles burning, his joints aching. But imagine the feeling when he finally put all that weight down. It must have felt like he could fly! Well, that's what forgiveness feels like. When we hold on to hurt, guilt, and shame, it's like carrying around a massive weight. But when you accept God's forgiveness, it's like putting that weight down and feeling free. Maybe today is the day you let go of whatever has been weighing you down. You can ask God to take the burden, so you can experience the freedom that comes with forgiveness.

This week, think about something that's been weighing you down. Then, take a moment to pray and ask God to help you let it go.

DAY 7

EPHESIANS 4:32, NIV

Think about this: When we choose not to forgive, who are we really hurting? Does holding a grudge make the person who wronged us feel bad? Probably not. The truth is, when we hold on to a grudge, we end up hurting ourselves the most. Carrying around resentment and bitterness can feel like being stuck with a ball and chain, dragging it around wherever you go. It weighs you down and keeps you from moving forward. But forgiveness frees you to move on in freedom. That's why God calls us to forgive! It's not just for the other person, but for your own sake, too. When we forgive, we let go of the weight that's holding us back from being the person God made us to be.

Today, think about one way taking a step toward forgiveness and letting go of any weight you've been carrying might benefit you. Then, pray for courage to do just that!

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR AN
everyday faith.

GIVE AND TAKE / WEEK 1

HIGH SCHOOL

DAY 1

LUKE 11:2-4, NLT

Forgiveness can feel difficult. It seems like there are so many things in life that hurt us, and yet, Jesus teaches us to forgive. He says that when we pray, we should ask for forgiveness just as we ask for help to forgive those who've wronged us. That's huge! It's almost like Jesus is challenging us to do more than we think we're capable of here. If we're asking for forgiveness, we also need to think about how willing we are to forgive others. Take a second to imagine the feeling of not carrying the weight of anger or grudges. Do you imagine feeling lighter? What would it look like if you could forgive and let go of resentment? When we practice forgiveness, we are able to take a step closer to experiencing that kind of freedom.

This week, try praying the simple prayer Jesus taught us to pray. Then, ask Jesus how you can forgive others the way He offers forgiveness to you.

DAY 2

MATTHEW 18:21-22, NLT

Have you ever had someone in your class who always tried to go above and beyond what the teacher asked for? That's what Peter was doing in his interaction with Jesus. Jewish law said people only had to forgive someone three times before they weren't obligated to forgive anymore. Peter more than doubled that when talking to Jesus, likely thinking saying seven times would impress Jesus. But Jesus goes further, telling Peter a number so high to demonstrate there is really no limit to forgiveness. However, this doesn't mean you shouldn't have boundaries. Forgiveness doesn't mean excusing harmful actions or letting someone continue to hurt you. Instead, it's about releasing the bitterness inside you and freeing yourself from holding onto hurt.

Take a moment today to ask God for help in forgiving others. Then, pray for help to establish healthy boundaries in those relationships going forward.

DAY 3

GENESIS 50:19-20a, NLT

Have you ever heard the story of Joseph? If not, it's a wild one. Imagine this: Joseph's own brothers were so jealous of him that they planned to kill him. But instead of killing him, they sold him to be a servant. Joseph's life was completely derailed after that. He was thrown into prison, treated like a nobody, and dealt with all kinds of hardships along the way. Fast forward to when Joseph rose to power in Egypt. Now, the same brothers who abandoned him came to him begging for help. Joseph could've gotten revenge, but instead, he chose to forgive. He realized that what they meant to harm him, God used for something good. Joseph didn't hold onto resentment, which set him free to forgive.

Today, think about someone who has hurt you. Is there resentment you're holding onto toward them? Ask yourself how letting go of that could bring you peace. Then, take one small step toward forgiveness—whether it's writing about your feelings or praying for help to forgive.

DAY 4

LUKE 15:24, NLT

In Luke 15, Jesus uses a parable, or a story, to show just how incredible forgiveness can be. He tells the story of this young man who asked for his inheritance early. That's not something that usually happened until the parent passed away, but this guy wanted the cash now! What happened? He took the money, blew it all, and had nowhere to go. Finally, he decided to go home and beg his dad for a job on his hands and knees. Instead of being angry or holding a grudge, his dad's response was to throw a party because his son had returned. No punishment, no guilt trip, just joy that his son was home. But here's the thing: This story isn't a free pass to make bad choices or take advantage of grace. It's a reminder that forgiveness is a gift, not something we should expect or take lightly. The son didn't deserve it, but he was given it anyway. And the same is true for us!

This week, read the full parable in Luke 15:11-32. Pay attention to what it might teach you about the power of forgiveness, both for yourself and for others.

DAY 5

1 JOHN 1:9, NIV

Written by Gabi Luevano, age 21, from Hull, IA

Have you ever felt lost, confused, or guilty in a messy relationship that you wished could just start over? Have you ever wished you could have a clean slate with no bad or broken history? Well, in your relationship with God, you can. In Scripture, a guy named John taught us how to renew our relationship with God. If we choose to be completely open and honest and bring everything—our mistakes, hurts, and pain—to Jesus, He will clean the slate. If we ask Him to forgive us where we've gone wrong, He will make our relationship with Him like new. In other words, we can all start over.

Today, take a moment to talk to God about any areas you feel like you've gone wrong. Be honest and open as you share. Then, ask God to forgive you

and remind you that your sins are forgiven because of Jesus.