



# Believing Is Seeing: Mirror of Forgiveness

## **Day 1—God's Heart of Forgiveness and God's Command to Forgive**

Read and meditate on Psalm 103:10-12; Romans 5:8; and Colossians 2:13-14. What price did God pay that our sin/your sin might be forgiven? Now consider God's command that we forgive others as you read Matthew 6:9-15; 18:21-35; Ephesians 4:32; and Colossians 3:12-14. Consider that God commands us to forgive because God loves us and knows what will enable us to live the fullest, most joyful lives. Reflect on what forgiveness is and is not. It is not winking at sin, enduring abuse, denying the consequences of sin, or forgetting. Instead it is letting go of the desire for revenge, of bitterness, and of anger which rob us of peace; it is reflecting God's heart to others. Pray.

## **Day 2—Joseph, Jesus, Stephen, and Us: Forgiveness Is Possible!**

Forgiveness is not easy, but it is possible. Joseph suffered much at the hands of his brothers and then as a slave in Egypt, yet he forgave. Read Genesis 37:12-28; 45:1-11; 50:15-21. Such forgiveness could only happen as Joseph fixed his eyes on God and not on the evil that was perpetuated against him. Ponder this as you read about Jesus and Stephen in Luke 23:34 and Acts 7:59-60. Now consider the fruit of forgiveness. Who is blessed when forgiveness is offered; is it only the forgiven who are blessed, or is the forgiver blessed too? Pray for a heart open to God's truth.

## **Day 3—Bitterness Hurts the One Who Is Bitter**

Ponder the story of Joseph again (*texts in Day 2*). Now read Colossians 3:13-14. Do we forgive for God's sake? Actually, it's God's great love that motivates the command to forgive, for God knows that forgiveness sets us free, whereas bitterness destroys like a deadly cancer. Rubin Carter, unjustly imprisoned for 19 years, said, "I've learned that bitterness only consumes the vessel that contains it...for me to permit bitterness to...infect my life...would be to allow those who imprisoned me to take even more than...they've already taken" (*quoted in Our Daily Bread; RBC Ministries, 2008, Vol.53, #4*). Have you allowed bitterness to reign in your life? Pray for the grace to forgive.

## **Day 4—God Can Redeem All Things**

Read Genesis 45:4-8; 50:19-21; Acts 7:59-8:4; and 2 Corinthians 5:21. Joseph, Jesus, and Stephen suffered greatly, yet God redeemed their suffering and used it for good. Does that mean their suffering was just or good? Of course not! But God can use even human evil for divine, eternal purposes. Joseph lived to see the children of Jacob (Israel) spared because of his suffering; Jesus, of course, offered Himself up as a sacrifice, knowing it was the price of redemption; Stephen never lived to see the spread of the Gospel precipitated by his martyrdom. Read Romans 8:28; pray for understanding about how God can use forgiveness as part of His plan to redeem even the greatest heartaches.

### **Day 5—Immeasurable Grace!**

Sin, any sin, is an offense to God, who is holy. And we all have sinned (*Romans 3:23*). But God's love is so great that God paid the price of our redemption (*Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9-11*). There is no way we can repay God; the cost of our redemption is beyond measure. But we, who have received God's grace for today and forever, can forgive others, and in doing so, reflect God's love, witness with our lives, and bring God glory. Read Matthew 18:21-35. Did you notice the huge disparity between the debt owed to the king and the debt owed to the servant? Are you willing to see offenses against you through the lens of God's total forgiveness of your sin debt? Pray about this.

### **Day 6—First Steps**

It's easy to speak of forgiveness, but it's not always easy to forgive. Often we don't even know how to begin. Begin with honest prayer. Ask the Lord to give you an open heart that is willing to forgive. Now read Matthew 5:43-46 and Romans 12:20-21. Are you willing to pray for or bless someone who has hurt you or hurt others? Are you willing to pray he/she will meet Jesus and experience grace? It is a beginning. Consider Saul, the persecutor of Christians, who became Paul, the great apostle. We aren't told, but consider that someone might have been praying for him, in spite of how he destroyed the lives of many. Read Acts 22:2-5; 26:9-18. For whom will you pray?

### **Day 7—His Forgiveness Can Become Ours**

Corrie ten Boom suffered much at the hands of the Nazis, yet she traveled the world speaking of and demonstrating forgiveness. Ponder her words, "Why should we hold on to the sins of others while our own sins have been cast into the depths of the sea?" (*Micah 7:19*) When asked how forgiveness is possible, she said, "The love which God has for you in Christ Jesus is the same love that He will pour out into your heart through His Spirit. If you open your heart to receive it, then His love will become your love, and His forgiveness your forgiveness" (*Amazing Love, Christian Lit. Crusade, 1953, pp.10,12*). Reflecting again on our forgiveness texts, talk to Jesus about all that's on your heart.