
WORSHIP

Suggested worship songs: Amazing Love (You Are My King), Today, By Your Love, What He's Done

WELCOME

What's the most poisonous animal that you or a close family member or friend have ever encountered up close and personal? How did you react?

WORD

COLOSSIANS 3:12-13

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

One of the most difficult aspects of life on planet earth, is forgiveness. There is fake forgiveness --- we say we forgive someone just as long we never ever see his face again. Apart from God, it is impossible to truly forgive. God is forgiving --- when the LORD introduced Himself to Moses, He revealed His "personal" name (the capital LORD) because He wants you to know Him personally. He revealed His attributes to Moses, showing how He is a forgiving God (**Exodus 34:6-7**); that's why we need to forgive.

True forgiveness is a choice to obey God's commands. It is not based on feelings but is an act of the will. It does not mean forgetting, nor does it mean the absence of consequences. It is the evidence of genuine salvation, based on having experienced God's forgiveness.

OUR ETERNAL IDENTITY

It's not forgetting, nor does it mean the absence of consequences. Erika Kirk forgave the the shooter of her husband, but the consequences of what the shooter did are out of our hands. Forgiveness and consequences can be very different things. You and I choose forgiveness because of who we are in Christ -- it is part of our eternal destiny. Choosing forgiveness should be an everyday practice. As Max Lucado said, "You will never forgive anyone more than God has already forgiven you."

We have been chosen by God; we are holy and beloved (**Colossians 3:12**). Jesus told His disciples that He chose them, not the other way around (**John 15:16**). Ultimately, Jesus chose you and me! "*Chose*" means to "select out of by a highly deliberate choice". The Lord was not random when He chose you and me, and He was not playing favorites when He chose even the Israelites. How humbling to know that He chooses because that's what He decides to do in His sovereignty. But Jesus didn't just say He chose you...He also appointed you. That means to ordain or appointed us to do something --- to glorify God and to make Christ-committed followers. We are not only chosen individuals, we have also been brought into a spiritual family (**1 Peter 2:9**). We are made holy because of Jesus. The perfect righteousness of Christ was credited to us when we accepted Him as Savior and Lord. That's how God sees us now, and it's also true that we are meant to live a holy life (progressive sanctification). We are now a holy nation so that we may glorify God every day, and tell people about Jesus, helping them grow in their relationship with Him.

OUR EVERYDAY PRACTICE

The great love of God is so alien to this world (**1 John 3:1**), and we have received all these as His children that all add up to our being forgiven people. How does a forgiven person look like? Jesus tells a story to

illustrate this and contrast the self-righteous attitude of Simon, a Pharisee and a "sinful" woman who was broken and admitted she needed His forgiveness (**Luke 7:41-47**). Which one are we? We are to "put on a heart" of compassion, kindness, etc., implying intentionality and consistency on our part (**Colossians 3:12**). Jesus taught His disciples to ask God in prayer to "forgive us our debts (obligations) as we have forgiven our debtors" (**Matthew 6:12, 14-15**). This has nothing to do with our salvation, but those who are saved still need to confess our sins because when we sin, we put a gap in our fellowship with God. "Forgiven" is in the past tense, so if you have already forgiven others, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive, then He will not forgive your sins. When Joseph forgave his brothers, he recognized that he was not God (**Genesis 50:19-20**). From the beginning, pride has been our problem --- we want to take the place of God! When we refuse to forgive, we are taking God's place because we are disobeying His commands.

Now, when we offend somebody, you need to ask for forgiveness before you can even go to God with your offerings as Jesus taught (**Matthew 5:23-24**). Here are some blessings of choosing forgiveness and the consequences of unforgiveness:

BLESSINGS of Choosing Forgiveness	CONSEQUENCES of Unforgiveness
1. Joy of pleasing God 2. Display Christlikeness 3. Peace of mind and heart 4. Improved physical health 5. Stronger relationships	1. Imprisoned in the past 2. Fall for the devil's trap 3. Bitterness, anger 4. Physical ailments 5. Hindrance to blessings and answered prayers

OUR EXCELLENT MODEL

We have an excellent model in forgiveness --- Jesus (**Colossians 3:13**). As CS Lewis said, "*To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.*"

Peter once came to Jesus to ask about how many times we must forgive someone who offends us. The answer Jesus gave meant that God's people must be ready to forgive, and to forgive always (**Matthew 18:21-22**). To leave the consequences and justice to Him. Jesus illustrated this with a parable where a forgiven slave refused to forgive his fellow slave and was handed over to torturers (**Matthew 18:23-34**). When we refuse to forgive, we will never get away with it because the Holy Spirit will hound us, and our conscience will convict us! When we refuse to forgive, it will torture us inside.

The person who forgave others is the first one who benefits from it. The "older brother" in the Prodigal Son

parable based his relationship with his father on performance. He forgot the meaning of "grace", and that his father loved him as much as he loved the younger son, that's why he forgave the prodigal son (**Luke 15:28-32**). Amazingly, Jesus left this story

hanging, and we need to decide what we will do if we were the older brother. Will we forgive, or not? Receive God's forgiveness through Christ and let Him transform your heart to forgive others as you have been forgiven by the LORD.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. For you, what is the hardest part about forgiveness and why?
2. How does knowing who you are in Christ---and how He has forgiven you --- help you forgive others?
3. Who do you need to forgive? From whom do you need to seek forgiveness? What will you do about it?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for people in your life who may be struggling with unforgiveness towards family members, people at work, etc. Share how you have experienced God's forgiveness through Jesus. Tell them how they too can enter a relationship with Jesus and receive forgiveness for all their sins, and the power to forgive others.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- For legislators to promote and support bills and laws aligned with God's Word.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented.
- For the rest of the Israeli hostages to be restored to their families safely. For Israel's war with terrorists to end according to God's purpose and for His glory.
- Pray for Jewish people worldwide who are experiencing a surge of antisemitism; may this lead them to the Messiah, Jesus as they turn to God for help and comfort.
- For protection of Iranian, Syrian and Lebanese Christians and other minorities, and freedom from oppression. Pray for the gospel to spread rapidly throughout their region.
- Pray for Sudanese and Nigerian persecuted Christians; earnestly seek God's intervention to stop the bloodshed. Pray for freedom from oppression, that God's word and His people bring them

comfort and hope.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God, and make disciples
- For elders, pastors, deacons, and families to become holy, humble, harmonious, happy, and heart-working)
- For ministries and church expansions worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain (MMRC)

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper and intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE

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