

FORGIVENESS IS NOT OPTIONAL

Companion Workbook

A Biblical Reflection, Surrender, and Obedience Workbook

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PREFACE

This workbook was not created to help you replay another person's failures. It was created to help you stand honestly before God. Many people approach forgiveness by continually revisiting the offense, reliving painful memories, and measuring the failures of the person who hurt them. But when the heart stays fixed on the offender, bitterness quietly grows stronger. Scripture calls us somewhere else. Back to our own walk with God. Back to our own obedience. Back to our own surrender before Jesus Christ. Forgiveness is not pretending that pain never happened. It is choosing to release the weight of bitterness, resentment, pride, and vengeance into the hands of God. As you move through these pages, resist the temptation to focus on another person's sin. Instead ask: "Lord, what are You showing me about my own heart?" That is where healing begins.

CHAPTER 1

WHY FORGIVENESS IS RESISTED

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

— James 4:7

Scripture Focus

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

— *James 4:7*

Heart Examination

- What am I still holding tightly in my heart?
- Where do I feel justified in refusing to forgive?
- How has this affected my relationship with God?

Quiet Reflection Before God

Write honestly before God as you examine your own heart, responses, thoughts, and relationship with Christ.

Truth Before God

Forgiveness is ultimately an act of obedience before God. It is the surrender of bitterness, pride, resentment, and self-protection into His hands.

Prayer

Lord, search my heart and expose anything within me that is resisting surrender, forgiveness, humility, or obedience. Teach me to walk in mercy, freedom, trust, and peace before You. Keep my eyes fixed on Christ and not on the failures of others. Amen.

Obedience Step

What is one thing I need to release before God today?

CHAPTER 2

FORGIVENESS IS NOT A FEELING

And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. — Mark 11:25

Scripture Focus

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Heart Examination

- Am I waiting to feel ready before I obey God?
- Have my emotions become the foundation of my decisions?
- What would obedience look like apart from emotion?

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Obedience Step

What decision of obedience do I need to make today?

CHAPTER 3

WHAT FORGIVENESS ACTUALLY DOES

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. — Matthew 6:12

Scripture Focus

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. — Matthew 6:12

Heart Examination

- What burden am I still carrying internally?
- How has holding onto offense affected my peace?
- What do I need to surrender fully to Christ?

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Obedience Step

What am I no longer willing to carry?

CHAPTER 4

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU REFUSE

*But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive
your trespasses. — Mark 11:26*

Scripture Focus

But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses. — Mark 11:26

Heart Examination

- Where has unforgiveness begun affecting my heart?
- Have I become hardened or spiritually distant?
- What warning signs do I see within myself?

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Obedience Step

What must I release immediately before God?

CHAPTER 5

HOW FORGIVENESS BEGINS

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

— *James 4:7*

Scripture Focus

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

— James 4:7

Heart Examination

- Have I truly surrendered this situation to God?
- Am I still trying to control outcomes?
- What would full surrender look like?

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Obedience Step

What am I placing into God's hands today?

CHAPTER 6

WHEN THE MEMORY RETURNS

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. — 2 Corinthians 10:5

Scripture Focus

Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God. — 2 Corinthians 10:5

Heart Examination

- What thoughts continually pull me backward?
- How do I respond when painful memories return?
- Where do I need renewed discipline in my thinking?

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Obedience Step

How will I respond differently when these thoughts return?

CHAPTER 7

WHEN OTHERS DO NOT CHANGE

For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? — 1

Corinthians 7:16

Scripture Focus

For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? — 1

Corinthians 7:16

Heart Examination

- Have I tied my peace to another person changing?
- Do I trust God’s timing more than my own expectations?
- Where do I need deeper surrender?

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Obedience Step

How can I remain faithful regardless of another person's choices?

CHAPTER 8

WHEN FORGIVENESS BECOMES ONGOING

*And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we
faint not. — Galatians 6:9*

Scripture Focus

And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. — Galatians 6:9

Heart Examination

- Where have I become spiritually weary?
- Am I losing consistency in prayer or obedience?
- What is God teaching me through perseverance?

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Obedience Step

What faithful step will I continue taking this week?

CHAPTER 9

GUARDING THE HEART FROM BITTERNESS

Charity thinketh no evil. — 1 Corinthians 13:5

Scripture Focus

Charity thinketh no evil. — 1 Corinthians 13:5

Heart Examination

- Have I allowed bitterness to shape my thinking?
- Where has resentment changed my heart?
- Am I seeing others through hurt instead of through God's mercy?

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Obedience Step

What thought patterns need to be surrendered to Christ?

CHAPTER 10

WHEN YOU BEGIN TO WITHDRAW

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you. — Ephesians 4:31

Scripture Focus

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you. — Ephesians 4:31

Heart Examination

- Where have I emotionally or spiritually withdrawn?
- Have I become guarded instead of surrendered?
- What areas of my heart need softening?

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Obedience Step

Where do I need to re-engage spiritually with God?

CHAPTER 11

WHEN THE HEART BECOMES HARD

Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. — Hebrews 3:15

Scripture Focus

Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. — Hebrews 3:15

Heart Examination

- Has my heart become resistant or cold?
- Am I allowing pain to shape my responses?
- What is God calling me back to?

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Obedience Step

What must I return to before God?

CHAPTER 12

THE DECISION TO FORGIVE

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

— *James 1:22*

Scripture Focus

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

— *James 1:22*

Heart Examination

- What am I still struggling to release?
- Have I fully surrendered this matter before God?
- What step of obedience is God asking of me now?

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Obedience Step

What am I choosing to release before God today?

FINAL REFLECTION

Forgiveness is not ultimately about another person. It is about your heart before God. As you continue forward, remember that obedience to Christ is more important than holding onto offense, replaying pain, or waiting for others to change. God sees what you carry, and He alone is able to bring healing, freedom, and peace. Keep your eyes fixed on Christ.

FINAL PRAYER

Lord, help me walk in forgiveness, humility, surrender, and obedience before You. Guard my heart from bitterness, resentment, pride, and hardness. Teach me to trust You fully with every hurt, every memory, and every unanswered question. Keep my eyes fixed on Christ and continue shaping my heart into one that reflects Your mercy and grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.