



BLIND

free

day ONE

READ Ephesians 4:2 and 4:31-32.

FORBEAR -- to show restraint, to be patient in the face of provocation, to be long-suffering, to let things go, to forgive.

How easy is it for someone to get "on the outs" with you?

Do you give others the benefit of the doubt or do you assume the worst?

Are you angry with or offended and hurt by others more often than not?

ASK yourself, "*What's my go-to response to the following situations?*"

- Your spouse fails to notice something special you have done for him/her
- Your adult children don't call as often as you'd like
- Your waiter takes the order of a table seated after you before taking yours
- Your boss blames you for something someone else did
- Your mother-in-law says something that hurts your feelings
- Someone walks right by you at church without saying a word
- The person in the car beside you almost ran you off the road
- A close friend says something insensitive and hurtful to you
- A family member disagrees with a decision you've made

In Choosing Forgiveness Nancy DeMoss writes, "Exercising forbearance in minor matters is important practice for extending forgiveness in the bigger issues." *How well do you deal with the minor matters?*

READ Psalm 139:1-3. **ASK** God to speak in to your heart. **SPEND** time reading through the situations above again and just **ALLOW** God to speak.

day TWO

READ John 15:18-27 and John 16:33. We can approach life expecting that everyone is out to wrong us, that we should never be hurt or disappointed, or we can understand that all of us will have trouble, will be slighted and wronged, but don't have to be defined by it.

Jesus tells us to **take heart** (*be encouraged*) that "in him we may have peace." *How do we do that? How do we not become consumed by every wrong done to us?* **CHOOSE** to be a person of forgiveness. **CHOOSE** to be forgiving before you are even wronged. *But what if I'm really hurt? Don't I need to make that decision after the fact?*

Forgiving doesn't deny a wrong has been done, or that a debt is owed. Forgiving makes a decision to forgive the wrong and release the debt. We find freedom and peace **NOT** in debating whether or not we will forgive, but in discerning the steps we must take to enter into the forgiving process.

PRAY: Father, choosing to forgive – even before I've been wronged – is a concept that's completely counter-cultural. I find power as I hold on to the option of forgiveness. **HELP** me to let go. **HELP** me to lay it down and embrace Your heart – a heart of forgiveness.

day THREE

Let's examine how we became who we are today. *How did I get here?*

What was my family like? Did my parents model forgiveness?

Was forgiveness common when I was growing up? Or is there a pattern of relationships in my past based on 'an eye for an eye' retribution?

What assumptions do I make about forgiveness?

Is there a "nobody does that to me" prideful attitude just below the surface?

JOURNAL the answers to those questions. **READ** Colossians 3:12-13 and

Colossians 1:13. **CONSIDER** how much forgiveness God has given you.

Forgiving is giving the person who has wronged us what they need instead of what they deserve. *What does God's forgiveness mean to you?*

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die.⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:6-8

day FOUR

READ James 5:16 and I John 1:9.

GO back and **REREAD** what you've written in your journal during the last few days.

First, **PRAY** and **CONFESS** to God those areas you haven't forgiven like He forgives. Specifically **LIST** the people, situations, patterns, thoughts which He has shown you. Confession is agreeing with God and others that your thoughts and behavior don't line up with what He wants.

Second, **PRAY** and **ASK** God to show you who you should confess these same things to, someone with skin (*like someone within your community, your small group or your accountability partner*).

day FIVE

READ Matthew 5:43-48.

NOTHING CLEANSES THE SOUL LIKE EMBRACING "I FORGIVE YOU."

REVIEW your journal. *Is there someone or some area that didn't make the list yesterday?* **IDENTIFY** a specific area or person who needs forgiveness.

What or whom do you need to forgive?

PRAY and ask God to give you strength and wisdom to deal with this one.

START by writing it out as a bill or receipt. **WRITE** it out: "_____ (so and so) owes me _____ because he/she _____." **SIGN** it. Now, **FIND** a red pen.

WRITE over the entire page in big red capital letters - **PAID IN FULL**.

TAKE that bill and tear it up into little pieces. As you throw away or burn these pieces, **ASK** God to cleanse your heart of this issue as you release those who've wronged you.