

DEVO ~ Week of August 1 - 5

Begin each day this week by praying **THE LORD'S PRAYER**:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed by Your name, Your kingdom come,

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give me today my daily bread.

And forgive me my debts, as I have forgiven my debtors."

DAY 1

READ Matthew 5:38-42.

Forgiveness is choosing to take away a debt you have a right to demand. It's a choice, as well as an act of mercy and grace when we forgive those who have wronged us while taking their debts as our own. Forgiveness means the debt has been paid and nothing more is owed to anyone.

When we first went through our series on forgiveness, was there someone you needed to forgive? **THINK** about that person now. Have you forgiven him/her? If so, **CELEBRATE** the freedom and peace which results from having a heart of forgiveness. If you haven't forgiven him/her, **PRAY**... asking God to reveal that truth to you. Remember, when we refuse to forgive someone who has wronged us, our hearts become burdened by the unforgiveness and we walk the path which leads to contempt.

DAY 2

READ Matthew 5:21-24.

What does Jesus identify as a path to anger, contempt and even murder? Unforgiveness is like drinking poison and hoping someone else would die. **THINK** about how unforgiveness leads to contempt.

PRAY: God, I confess that when I'm hurt I still want to hold on to it. Letting go feels like pretending it never happened. Help me trust your ways and your wisdom. Help me choose forgiveness.

DAY 3

READ John 16:33 and 2 Timothy 3:12.

In Choosing Forgiveness, Nancy DeMoss writes, "We simply don't have any choice about many of the things that happen to us. Our only hope lies in realizing that we do have a choice about how we respond to life's circumstances – and it is those responses that determine the outcome of our life."

READ Hebrews 12:15 and Ephesians 4:31-32.

Which path have you chosen? A person on the path of unforgiveness

stores up resentment, bitterness, anger, frustration, and solitude that can leave him/her lonely and small. A person on the path of forgiveness stores up mercy and grace and finds healing for his/her soul.

Are you on the path of forgiveness?

What have you been storing in your heart?

DAY 4

READ Hebrews 12:15 and Ephesians 4:31-32 again.

Remember the landmarks on the path of unforgiveness...

As you read through the following statements, ask God to bring to light any landmarks identifying a path of unforgiveness:

- In my mind I often replay the incident(s) that hurt me.
- When I think of a particular person or situation, I still feel angry.
- I try not to think about the person, event, or circumstance which caused me so much pain.
- I have a subtle secret desire to see this person pay for what he/she did to me.
- I often find myself telling others how this person has hurt me.
- A lot of my conversations (both in my head and to others) revolve around this situation.
- Whenever his/her name comes up, I'm more likely to say something negative than positive about him/her.

PRAY: God, show me and help me root out all forms of bitterness, resentment and anger in my life. Help me daily to choose grace, mercy and forgiveness.

DAY 5

Forgiving doesn't deny a wrong has been committed, or a debt is owed. Forgiveness is a decision to forgive the wrong **and** release the debt. We find freedom and peace NOT in debating whether or not we'll forgive, but in discerning the steps we must take to enter into the forgiving process. We're striving to become people who choose to forgive... even before we've been wronged.

READ Matthew 5:43-48.

Is there something or someone you need to forgive?

CONFESS to God any unforgiveness you're holding and **ASK** Him to show you the steps to take toward forgiveness. **CONSIDER** writing the hurt or offense out as a bill or receipt

"_____ owes me _____ because he/she _____." **SIGN** it.

Now, take a red pen and write over the entire page **PAID IN FULL**.

TEAR the bill into pieces or burn it. **ASK** God to cleanse your heart of this issue as you release those who have wronged you.