

# Forgiveness and Reconciliation

## WORKBOOK

And forgive us our sins,  
as we have forgiven those who sin against us. (Matthew 6:12 NLT)

Craig Caster



Discipleship  
Individual Study  
Small Groups

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*Forgiveness and Reconciliation* by Craig Caster

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## **A Letter from the Author**

Dear Disciple,

After many years of counseling, I realized how many Christians were stuck in their spiritual journeys because they were naive about basic biblical truths on forgiveness.

These biblical truths can set a person free from the hurts and mistakes they made in their past. When a Christian lacks understanding, Satan uses their hurts and mistakes as a weapon to inflict fear, doubt, and strongholds. This hinders our spiritual growth, negatively affecting those we love.

It is my prayer that this workbook will guide you into a deeper understanding of God's principles to find healing and reconciliation for yourself and others. By working out these truths in your life, you will draw near to Jesus and begin to walk in His righteousness.

May you draw near to Him daily, experience healing, and become the disciple He has called and anointed you to be.

In Christ,

Pastor Craig Caster

# Lesson 1

## God's Sovereignty

God knows each of us intimately, that all our acts and thoughts are known to Him even before they are known to us. A beautiful description of God's sovereignty is found in Psalm 139.

You have searched me and known me.  
 You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
 You understand my thought from afar.  
 You scrutinize my path and my lying down,  
 And are intimately acquainted with all my ways.  
 Even before there is a word on my tongue,  
 Behold, O Lord, You know it all. (Psalm 139:1-4 NASB)

### **FACT FILE**

*Sovereign*—Possessing supreme power, unlimited wisdom, and absolute authority.

Before you opened your heart to God, by accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, He knew you would come. God is not willing that any should perish. However, through the exercise of free will, He gives every individual the freedom to reject Him.

God created Adam and Eve, and He gave only one restriction: do not eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. But they were deceived by Satan and, in disobedience, chose to eat the fruit of that tree. This brought the curse of sin on all mankind. In Adam, God gave mankind the freedom to choose good, but he turned to evil. Therefore all who now choose to be reborn as God's children, by faith in Christ, still live in a fallen world and are touched by the evil around them.

All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing,  
 But He does according to His will in the host of heaven  
 And among the inhabitants of the earth;  
 And no one can ward off His hand  
 Or say to Him, "What have You done?" (Daniel 4:35 NASB)

### **Trusting God with Our Past and Trials**

If God shielded His children from all trouble and evil, people would only be motivated to turn to Him for the guarantee of an easy life. In fact, this is the very argument that began the historic show down in heaven between God and Satan concerning the life of Job.

Then the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered My servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God and shuns evil?"

Then Satan answered the Lord, "Does Job fear God for nothing? Have You not made a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face."

And the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, all that he has is in your power; only do not lay a hand on his person." (Job 1:8-12 NASB)

How did God see Job (verse 8)?

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What did Satan say to God regarding Job (verses 9-11)?

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How did God respond to Satan (verse 12)?

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God allowed Satan to test Job's faith through the loss of his possessions, his children, and finally his health. God is a loving Father and does not bring evil into our lives. However, for His purpose and for our ultimate good, He allows us to be touched by trials. Job continued to trust God throughout his suffering, which ultimately resulted in a deeper, more intimate relationship with his Creator and complete restoration of blessing.

Job questioned why God was allowing him to suffer (Job 7:20). God had declared Job a righteous man (Job 2:3), so he asked why. For several chapters he agonized over the reason for his trials. God never answered directly but turned Job's attention to His power and glory, which is displayed in creation. Job's search was eventually satisfied through deeper understanding of the greatness of God. Just like Job, when we experience trials, we look for an explanation. And so it is with our marriages, raising our children, selfish choices by others, and the trials that seem so overwhelming. One of the many lessons we can learn from Job is that *why* is the wrong question. We should instead ask God *what*.

### **What Are You Trying to Teach Me?**

What is Your will for me in this season of suffering?

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.  
(James 1:13-14 NASB)

Then Job answered the Lord and said,  
“I know that You can do all things,  
And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted. . . .  
I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear;  
But now my eye sees You.” (Job 42:1–2, 5 NASB)

Is any part of your life beyond God’s power, wisdom, or authority? Why or why not?

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What circumstance in your life did God not know beforehand that you would face?

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In Him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will.  
(Ephesians 1:11 NIV)

How should you respond to life’s disappointments, difficulties, suffering, and trials?

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### **Working Out Our Good**

If God knew all that would happen before we were born, then it follows that, through His foreknowledge, we were predestined through His grace to live the life given to us. God does not keep trials or evil from touching us, or prevent our bad choices, but He does promise to work all for good in the life of those who are committed to Him.

And we know that God causes all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son.  
(Romans 8:28–29 NASB)

You can choose to either harbor bitterness toward parents who disappointed you, a spouse who deserted you, friends who failed you, or a drunk driver who killed a loved one. Or we can place our faith in a sovereign God.

When we come to Christ, we trust God with our eternal destiny. We must also trust Him with our past and present circumstances. Christ can comfort and strengthen us both in and through our trials and can bring good out of bad. It is only through our faith and obedience that God can and will give us peace and bring praise, honor, and glory to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Describe what these verses mean and how they can be applied to your personal circumstances.

In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

(1 Peter 1:6-7 NASB)

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God is a loving Father who does not bring evil into our lives. However, He allows us to be touched by evil for His purpose and for our ultimate good. Ask God for the faith to trust Him. He will answer your prayer.



## Lesson 2

### Trials and Tribulation

God's Word teaches that trials and tribulations are part of the Christian life.

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.  
(John 16:33)

Jesus tells us that we can have peace and that He has overcome the world, but amid trials we ask, "Why? What is God's purpose?" Just as the refiner places crude gold into a crucible and administers heat to bring dross (impurity) to the surface, God allows His beloved children to go into the crucible of suffering to be refined and transformed into the image of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

#### **FACT FILE**

*Tribulation*—Distress or suffering resulting from oppression, persecution, afflictions; a trial.

He will sit as a smelter and purifier of silver, and He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, so that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness. (Malachi 3:3 NASB)

What does God do through our trials?

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#### **God's Purpose**

If we trust ourselves to God's goodness and purpose, our hearts will become permeated with the love, hope, and confidence of Jesus Christ. Others will see the righteousness of Jesus Christ being worked out in us.

My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:2-4)

Rewrite James 1:2-4 (above) in your own words.

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God does not say *some* things work together for good, but *all things*. The key is faith; if we choose to believe God's promises and trust Him in all our trials and tribulations, we will be victorious, and God will be glorified. In this passage, "to those who love God" refers to those who have received Jesus as Lord and Savior, which includes an understanding that God's purpose in this life is to deliver us from the power of sin, which translates to becoming one who can choose righteousness over evil. Glory to God.

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.  
(2 Corinthians 2:14 NASB)

Are you willing to trust God with the trials and challenges in your life?  Yes  No

Are you willing to allow God to transform your life through these trials?  Yes  No

Are you willing to trust God as you work through these hurts and trials in your life?  
 Yes  No

There are times, says Jesus, when God cannot lift the darkness from you, but trust Him. God will appear like an unkind friend, but He is not; He will appear like an unnatural Father, but He is not; He will appear like an unjust judge, but He is not. Keep the notion of the mind of God behind all things strong and growing. Nothing happens in any particular unless God's will is behind it, therefore you can rest in perfect confidence in Him. —Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*

### Remaining Faithful

Job remained a faithful servant during his time of suffering which resulted in more trust, greater faith, and a deeper intimacy with God.

Read Job 42:11-16. How did God provide Job comfort for his suffering (verse 11)?

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What was the rest of Job's life like (verses 12-16)?

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Job refused to blame God for his suffering and trusted Him through his pain. Job's trust in God left no room for bitterness to settle in his heart. Job's faith allowed him to receive comfort from his heavenly Father through his family and friends. God also rewarded Job's faithfulness with twice as much as he had before. This does not mean that all suffering will lead to abundant earthly blessings. On the contrary, the only thing guaranteed in this life is hardship. But no

matter what suffering, trials, or tribulation we experience now, we have the promise of an eternity spent in the presence of God where there will be no more tears or suffering.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. (2 Corinthians 1:3-4)

How can your experiences be used to help others?

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### **Trusting in His Plan**

God has an eternal plan: good will prevail and all evil, suffering, and sorrow will cease. We can choose to harbor bitterness toward those who have caused us pain, or we can place our faith in a sovereign God and forgive the offenses and failures of others.

When you accepted Christ as Savior and Lord, you put your trust in Him for your eternal destiny. You must also trust Him with your past experiences and present circumstances. He alone can comfort you in and through your trials and give you the strength to respond to them righteously. He alone can make good out of the bad and restore relationships that have been broken. Your obedience to God's Word amid your suffering will give you peace and bring praise, honor, and glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Lesson 3

### Why Forgive?

When a debt is forgiven, the rights to payment are surrendered. If I forgive someone who has wronged me, I give away the freedom to continue being angry and resentful toward them. I also give away the freedom to seek retribution. I let go of my own power and absorb the loss myself. True forgiveness is undeserved, unmerited, and free. It is not just or fair.

Along with the emotional and social devastation that results from unforgiveness, we are indebted to forgive. Let's examine four reasons to forgive.

#### First, God commands it.

Obedience to God is not optional. Deciding when we will and will not obey His commands leads to an unfruitful, ineffective, and spiritually barren life.

#### **FACT FILE**

*Forgive*—To give up, to resign, to cease to feel resentment against on account of wrong committed, to absolve, to pardon.

But love your enemies, and do good . . . and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned. (Luke 6:35–37 NASB)

And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.  
(Mark 11:25)

What did Jesus say we must do?

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Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. (Colossians 3:12–13)

What are the characteristics of God's chosen people?

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Identify the pain you have experienced from someone's offense toward you. Consider what you need to do to follow God's command.

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**Second, in forgiving, we bear the image of Jesus.**

As Christians, we are called to carry the name of Christ to a lost world. In fact, the term *Christian* means "little Christ." Christ demonstrated forgiveness, came to this earth, died to establish forgiveness for the guilty, and commissioned the church to proclaim forgiveness. To bear His image we must be willing to forgive others as He forgives us.

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."  
(Luke 23:34)

The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked. (1 John 2:6 NASB)

How are we to follow Jesus's example?

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**Third, forgiveness breaks the cycle of pain, blame, and strongholds.**

Forgiveness brings healing to a hurting person and functions as an antidote to the poison of bitterness. However it does not address all issues of blame and fairness but often disregards those altogether. The hurt and resentment is left behind with God, while obediently offering forgiveness brings freedom and enables one to start over in a relationship.

This truth is demonstrated in the life of Joseph, found in Genesis 37-45. Betrayed by his brothers and sold into slavery, he refused to allow the root of bitterness to take hold in his life. After years of separation, when the family was reunited, Joseph testified of the healing work God had done in his life through forgiveness, demonstrated by the names of his sons.

Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, "For," he said, "God has made me forget all my trouble and all my father's household." He named the second Ephraim, "For," he said, "God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."  
(Genesis 41:51-52 NASB)

In this passage, *forget* does not mean cease to remember. It means "to let go," or cease to let hurts control present life. Joseph's fruitfulness was directly related to putting his trust in God's sovereignty and forgiving others. Instead of multiplying his hurt by feeling it again and again (resentment), Joseph chose to trust God as the overseer of all events in his life.

How do the names of Joseph's sons show his trust in God?

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Unforgiveness imprisons us in the past and locks out all potential for a fruitful life.

During Joseph's years in Egypt, he allowed God to heal a heart that had been broken by his own brothers. Later, when given the opportunity, he demonstrated his healing through acts of love, forgiveness, and grace to his brothers.

Now do not be grieved or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here, for God sent me before you to preserve life ... and to keep you alive by a great deliverance. Now, therefore, it was not you who sent me here, but God. ... He kissed all his brothers and wept on them, and afterward his brothers talked with him. (Genesis 45:5, 7-8, 15 NASB)

What did Joseph say to his brothers?

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What did Joseph do?

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There was no blaming and no explanation demanded, only the voice of mercy and forgiveness. The way was cleared for Joseph and his brothers to be reunited and begin a new relationship.

**Fourth, forgiveness loosens the stranglehold of guilt in the offender.**

Forgiveness brings freedom to all involved. God set Joseph free, but his brothers would have carried their grief to the grave if Joseph had not forgiven them.

When Joseph's brothers had seen that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong which we did to him!" (Genesis 50:15 NASB)

We forgive because God forgives us through Christ. That same forgiveness, undeserved and unearned, is what we owe to others. It relieves the oppressive burden we know as guilt.

But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid, for am I in God’s place? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to keep many people alive.” (Genesis 50:19–21 NASB)

How did Joseph free his brothers from their fears?

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If Jesus had not extended kindness and forgiveness to sinners, we would all forever exist in the stranglehold of guilt. He made the first move toward us, which made it possible for us to be reconciled to Him.

In the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:7 NASB)

When sin entered the world, we were doomed to live in our guilt and shame for eternity. But God extended His hand in forgiveness by sending Christ to remove our guilt and restore our relationship with Him. Do you deserve the forgiveness you have received through Christ?

## Lesson 4

# The Cost of Unforgiveness

As God pardons us, we pardon others. The word *pardon* means “to grant freely.” True forgiveness is undeserved, unmerited, and free. It is not our place to decide what is just or fair. We are called to forgive—to *forget*—which means “to let go from one’s power.”

When we refuse to grant forgiveness, there is a price to pay. Unforgiveness, being unwilling to let go of offenses when we believe another person has wronged us, results in a negative emotional condition. The most common is resentment, which means “to feel again.” Resentment clings to past hurts, reliving them over and over. Resentment, like picking a scab, prohibits our emotional wounds from healing.

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled. (Hebrews 12:15 NASB)

What does bitterness cause?

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Bitterness is like a deep root taking hold in the human heart, which then grows and produces fruit. However, rather than nourishing others, this bitter fruit defiles both us and others.

Most people do not readily admit to harboring unforgiveness, resentment, or bitterness because they only recognize it as a logical emotional response after being hurt. They see their condition as justified and seek others to listen to their complaints or sympathize with them. Ephesians teaches that there will be undeniable evidence in an individual’s life that the bitter tree of resentment is growing within their heart.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. (Ephesians 4:31 NASB)

### **FACT FILE**

*Anger*—A state of mind marked by fretfulness and reacting to life’s challenges with frustration.

*Bitterness*—The state of being harshly reproachful; characterized by animosity or cruelty.

*Evil speaking*—Speech that is hurtful, corrupt, offensive, unpleasant; producing calamity, sorrow, distress.

*Malice*—Hateful feelings we nurture in our hearts. A desire to see another suffer or to separate ourselves from that person, not wanting to work toward reconciliation.

*Resentment*—The state of feeling an emotion, a feeling of indignant displeasure because of something regarded as a wrong, insult, or the like, often mingled with animosity, enmity, hatred.

*Wrath*—An outburst of a strong, vengeful anger or indignation, seeking retribution.



What evidence is present in the heart of someone clinging to bitterness?

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### **The Fruit of Unforgiveness**

Are any of the following attributes evident in your life? Put a check mark next to the ones you identify with.

- Absence of peace or joy
- Afraid to lead as a husband
- Afraid to follow as a wife
- Anxiety, tension, or stress
- Eating disorders
- Emotional disturbances
- Feeling distant from Jesus
- Health problems
- Judgmental or critical of others
- Lack of intimacy in marriage
- Lack of trust in relationships
- Pride
- Self-pity
- Self-righteousness
- Sexual dysfunction
- Ultrasensitive and easily offended
- Unhealthy sense of self-confidence

### **Warned by Jesus**

Jesus shared a parable with His disciples regarding the consequences for those who refuse to forgive. Read Matthew 18:21-35.

What was the master's disposition toward his servant in verse 27?

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How did the servant treat his fellow servant in verse 28?

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According to verses 34, how did the master respond to his servant's unwillingness to forgive?

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What did Jesus warn in verse 35?

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Think on the cross and the forgiveness and salvation we have received from Christ. How can we receive His forgiveness and yet refuse to extend forgiveness to others?

This parable does not teach that a born-again child of God will experience eternal ruin if he or she is unwilling to forgive; however, it does teach that they will be imprisoned by their unforgiveness—stuck in a constant cycle of reliving past pain. Is it possible to be free from the pain caused by ourselves and others? How are we supposed to live in harmony with others in a world full of sin and brokenness?

## Lesson 5

### Desiring Reconciliation

In Matthew, the Lord Jesus was asked an important question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?” (Matthew 22:36). His response revealed an essential truth:

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 22:37–40)

Jesus Himself said our love for others is equally as important as our love for Him. Loving someone who first loves us perfectly and unconditionally, to the point of giving up His life in our place, is not difficult. But loving people who consistently fail us, who love conditionally and imperfectly, and who have unintentionally or deliberately caused us pain is not easy.

We love Him because He first loved us. If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also. (1 John 4:19–21)

What two main points are given in these verses?

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We want God to forgive us, and we ask for this regularly and depend on it. God shows His love to us, and we are to respond by first loving Him and then loving others. This is *not* encouraging a love that would put us in conflict with God’s desires or will for us, but it says that all love we show toward others should be within the scope of our obedience to Him. We must not put our own desires or the desire to satisfy others above our obedience to God.

But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, “Raca!” shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, “You fool!” shall be in danger of hell fire. (Matthew 5:22)

To be “angry with his brother” means treating someone in thought, word, or deed in an unloving way. Even believers treat loved ones in an unloving way and excuse it rather than seek reconciliation.

#### FACT FILE

*Fool*—One who is morally worthless and undeserving of salvation.

*Raca*—To hold someone in contempt, judge, or believe them to be worthless or less than yourself in some way.

*Reconcile*—To restore to a right relationship, to settle or resolve differences.

Many believers aim serious charges at others. Yet the Lord says, “For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:20). We are to glorify or *reflect* Christ to all with no exception. Lingering thoughts or behaviors toward others that are unloving or not Christlike are inexcusable and require repentance both toward God and the person.

Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.  
(Matthew 5:23–24)

When do we go “to the altar”? This refers to our fellowship with Jesus, our time in prayer and thanksgiving, asking petitions of Him, and our daily acts of devotion. Our desire to abide in Him affects our ability to receive the grace necessary to bear fruit and obey His will. See *Appendix B: Recommended Books*.

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing. (John 15:5)

#### **FACT FILE**

*Abide*—To dwell with, to live in a constant awareness of being the temple of the Holy Spirit.

### **Examining Ourselves**

When we owe someone forgiveness, either by the asking or giving, God says we first must clear this up before we can expect His blessing and grace. What are the *gifts* to bring in Matthew 5:23? Bringing sacrifices to the temple was a common practice for the Jews as part of atoning for their sins. Our gifts today are praise, tithes, worship, obedience, and service to Him. Yet Jesus said He will not receive these gifts if you owe anyone reconciliation.

Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices,  
As in obeying the voice of the Lord?  
Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,  
And to heed than the fat of rams. (1 Samuel 15:22)

Service and work for God will not fix this problem. We are exhorted to examine ourselves before we take communion.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death till He comes.

Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. (1 Corinthians 11:26–32)

How often do Christians partake of communion without first examining their hearts to see if they are harboring bitterness or have sinned against someone and have not repented or do not plan to be reconciled?

Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. (Romans 13:8)

### **Seeking Reconciliation**

Forgiveness and reconciliation are two different things. Forgiveness can be given to anyone who has caused you pain, but godly reconciliation is for previously existing relationships that have been broken.

Reconciliation is the removal of enmity, the resolution of a quarrel. It implies that the parties being reconciled were formerly hostile to or separated from one another. Any successful reconciliation will be accompanied by kindness and peace rather than anger and turmoil.

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. (Ephesians 4:31-32 NASB)

Scripture instructs us to put away all bitterness, to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving.

How do we put away bitterness?

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How do we reconcile with someone we have offended?

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How do we repair the hurt we have caused others?

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How do we forgive someone who has offended us?

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How can we change our own feelings about a wrong done?

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Reconciliation is to be sought out for family members and other believers in our lives. Maintain respectful boundaries and healthy relationships.

### **Establishing Boundaries**

Some reconciled relationships will require wise boundaries. Forgiveness and reconciliation do not give the other person the freedom to treat you disrespectfully or harshly. Some people who have hurt you may continue to cause emotional or physical pain after you have forgiven them. Establishing boundaries for your emotional and physical well-being is essential. Successful reconciliation will be accompanied by peace and kindness. The other person must be willing to cooperate, or it will lead to further hurt and turmoil. If you need to, seek counsel from your pastor or mature Christian friend to help establish wise boundaries for your reconciled relationships.

If your mother was harsh or manipulative toward you when you were growing up and she continued after you moved out, you need to set boundaries in your relationship (after forgiving her). Kindly explain that you want a relationship with her but need to establish boundaries to not be hurt by her. Perhaps you could add, “Mom, I need you to speak to me in a loving way, and I promise to do the same toward you. If either of us say something unkind, we need to express that the other person hurt us. Or if we wish to not talk about a certain subject, we need to honor that. If those boundaries are not respected, then I will end the discussion. Mom, the only way we can truly know if we desire to have a relationship is by the way we love and respect each other.”

### **Unable to Reconcile**

Reconciliation is not necessary or even possible in some situations. For example, an emotionally or physically abusive parent, an abusive ex-spouse, or a random person who hurt you or a loved one. If the one you need to forgive is deceased or unwilling to reconcile, you can still forgive them. The death of the offender does not nullify God’s Word.

Bitterness in the human heart lives on long after the object of that bitterness has died. Forgiveness is the only antidote and always requires action. The principles remain the same. Begin by confessing your bitterness for the deceased person to the Lord. Then tell the Lord that you are no longer holding their faults or offenses against them, and instead, grant them forgiveness. I suggest you do this out loud in the presence of a trusted friend or pastor. Let God bring healing and fill those voids in your soul.

#### **FACT FILE**

*Confess*—To acknowledge or disclose one’s misdeed, fault, or sin.

Use the following prayer to guide you:

*Lord Jesus, thank You for dying on the cross and forgiving me for all my sins. I agree with Your Word that I must forgive this person for the hurt they caused me. I ask You for the strength to obey and speak these words of forgiveness. I forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ (be specific). I ask You to take away my bitterness and forgive me for holding on to this bitterness for so long. In Jesus's name I pray. Amen.*

True, biblical forgiveness requires action. We must do more than agree in our minds or hearts that we should forgive. The Bible does not command us to merely *feel* forgiveness. We must exercise our will and follow through with our actions.

## Lesson 6

### Steps to Forgiveness

As Christians we have a debt to pay that God Himself says we owe to others: to love them in thought, word, and deed. This also includes forgiving those who have hurt us. Many Christians are harboring bitterness, resentment, or unforgiveness toward someone and justifying these feelings because this person has not yet paid any consequence or taken responsibility for their behavior. But we *will* be hurt by others, even those who are supposed to love us, either ignorantly or deliberately.

The word *forgive* is a verb—an *action*. God is using His Word to speak to you right now, revealing truth that requires action. Forgiving is not easy. It can help to seek the support and accountability of a mature Christian to encourage you to follow through.

#### If You Need to Be Forgiven

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any unreconciled relationships in your life that have been affected by your sin. Keep in mind that you may not be currently aware of how you have caused pain to others. If the Holy Spirit reveals your sin in any of your relationships—past, present, or at some point in the future—you must humble yourself and follow these four steps.

#### 1. Confess your sin to God, ask Him to forgive you, and ask His Holy Spirit to fill your heart with His love.

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven,  
Whose sin is covered. . . .  
When I kept silent, my bones grew old  
Through my groaning all the day long.  
For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;  
My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.  
I acknowledged my sin to You,  
And my iniquity I have not hidden.  
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,"  
And You forgave the iniquity of my sin. (Psalm 32:1, 3–5)

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

How does God respond when we confess our sins to Him?

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As far as the east is from the west,  
So far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Psalm 103:12)



What does God do with our sin?

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Take a moment right now and cry out to God. Ask Him to forgive you for your specific sin, fill you with His Holy Spirit, and strengthen you to obey.

God alone forgives sins. He forgives and He forgets. By faith, accept God's absolute forgiveness and cleansing.

**2. If possible, go to those you have wronged, humbly make confession, and ask for their forgiveness.**

Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.  
(Matthew 5:23-24)

Write your commitment to obey Matthew 5:23-24.

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Six of the most powerful words in the English language are, *I was wrong. Please forgive me.*

Don't let distractions or other obstacles delay this act of obedience. Share your decision with a trustworthy Christian friend, asking them to pray with you and hold you accountable to follow through on this commitment. It is best to seek forgiveness face to face. However, due to logistics or a possible confrontation, you may need to communicate on the phone or in writing. If the person you have wronged has passed away, simply go to God with your confession.

**3. Spend time daily with the Lord in His Word and in prayer.**

One of the many negative consequences of not seeking or giving forgiveness is a hindered relationship with God. Praise the Lord that He never leaves us or forsakes us, but our own hearts can grow cold and distant, thus affecting our intimacy with Him. God designed this consequence to motivate us to practice forgiveness. See *Appendix A: Developing Daily Intimacy with God.*

But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. (Matthew 6:33)

Write your decision to spend time daily with God, both in His Word and in prayer.

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**4. Ponder the meaning of the cross and the sacrifice Jesus made for your sins.**

For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit.  
(Titus 3:3-5)

Take a moment to thank Jesus for all He has done for you, for forgiving you for all your sins, for His perfect plan of transforming you into His image, and for the gift of His Holy Spirit.

**Following Through**

Write the names and a brief description of what needs to be said for forgiveness. Write your commitment to ask for forgiveness for what God has revealed to you. Include a deadline to follow through.

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**If You Need to Forgive**

Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal anyone in your life whom you may be harboring bitterness toward. To allow God to bring healing to your heart, you must humble yourself and follow these three steps.

**1. Pray and ask God for the strength to obey and to forgive.**

Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. (1 John 5:14)

Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt . . . if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done." (Matthew 21:21)

What do you learn from these verses?

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God promises that if you ask “anything according to His will” in faith, then you will receive it. A heart of forgiveness is a characteristic that God desires to give you, but you must ask for it. It does not come naturally and at times will be extremely difficult, but God will be faithful in His promise to give you the strength you need to obey.

God promised to give us the strength to move mountains. This may be your Mount Everest.

Whenever I see myself before God and realize something of what my blessed Lord has done for me at Calvary, I am ready to forgive anybody anything, I cannot withhold it. I do not even want to withhold it. —Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

## **2. Communicate your forgiveness to the person or persons.**

After spending time with the Lord to prayerfully consider the few or many offenses made against you, approach the offender. If they said or did something, be specific about the offense. Sometimes, like with a parent, *many* things they did caused you pain. You can say, “I don’t believe you tried to hurt me, but things you said and did caused me pain.” If they want more details, encourage them to go through the parenting videos or workbooks at [www.FDM.world](http://www.FDM.world).

In any case, do not provide an opportunity for the other person(s) to defend themselves and justify their sin toward you. Simply state that they hurt you and you have been struggling with resentment or bitterness for a certain amount of time. Then communicate your forgiveness.

Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. (Romans 14:19)

Forgiveness is not an emotion. . . . Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. —Corrie ten Boom

## **3. Ask for forgiveness for harboring bitterness.**

The sin committed against you does not justify unforgiveness. Refusing to forgive, harboring bitterness and resentment in your heart, is equally sinful and must be repented of for authentic reconciliation. Sincerely ask them to forgive you for your resentment toward them.

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. (Matthew 6:14)

God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel. (Romans 2:16)

Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. (Romans 2:1)

### **Special Circumstances**

In some cases, due to logistics, cost of travel, safety to you, or the ability of the other person to be quiet long enough to let you say what you need to say, a letter, email, text, or phone call may be the best option.

Keep these points in mind when speaking or communicating in writing:

1. You are doing this out of obedience to your heavenly Father who loves and cares for you. He wants you to be free from the bondage and oppression you have been experiencing as a result of the hurt and unforgiveness in your heart.
2. You do not need to rehearse every detail of the offense done against you. If it was blatant sin, your offender is most likely aware of the details. There are circumstances when the offender may be unaware of the hurt they caused. This is common in relationships between parents and their children. Even in these circumstances, keep it brief. Providing a detailed explanation of all the reasons why you need to forgive is not important.
3. Do not try to compel others to own up to their offenses. God has called you to obey, not to be a prosecuting attorney, jury, or judge. Your healing will come from God because of your obedience, not from the other person who may or may not take ownership of their faults.
4. Keep it short. In most cases, due to the high level of emotions, it is easy to say things that are not planned that may undermine the purpose of the meeting, letter, or conversation.

### **Following Through**

Write your commitment to forgive the person or persons for what God has revealed to you. Set a deadline to follow through.

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The degree to which I am able and willing to forgive others is a clear indication of the extent to which I have personally experienced God my Father's forgiveness for me. —Phillip Keller

## Lesson 7

### Maintaining Your Commitment

You may encounter a battle between the Spirit and the flesh after you have asked for forgiveness or have forgiven another person.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (Galatians 5:22-26)

The forgiveness experience will change you and your relationships over time. God has had a major victory in your life, bringing you to this place of surrender and obedience. But this is only the beginning. Now you must press in and work through the needed changes. This will require that you seek God daily for His strength to continue on your path of mercy and compassion. See *Appendix A: Developing Daily Intimacy with God*.

Put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24)

What are we supposed to do with our former selves?

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You must stop responding to people as you once have and actively "put on the new" person God is transforming you to become. He will be faithful to produce His fruit in your life if you continually surrender to Him moment by moment. Keep in mind that your obedience is not so the other person will change. Your obedience is a response to the change God is making in you.

Write Philippians 1:6.

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For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 6:12)

You must keep in mind that your obedience in forgiving was not so the other person or persons would change. If they surrender their will to the Lord, they will experience God's grace, healing, and the ability to change. Only God can change our hearts and renew our minds, but it will only happen as we surrender to Him.

We are involved in a spiritual battle every day. The Enemy, Satan, does not want you to obey God or have victory over sin and hurts. He will attack your mind with memories, evil thoughts, lies, temptations, and condemnation. You must exercise mental self-control and remember what and whom you are battling!

“Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil. (Ephesians 4:26–27)

This is the reality in which we live. Satan hates to lose ground in your life. He wants to rob you of God's peace and joy.

### **Satan's Destruction**

Stop giving the devil opportunities to work his destruction in your life in these three ways.

#### **1. Test each thought that enters your mind by God's Word to see if it is from Him, from your flesh, or from the Enemy.**

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and being ready to punish all disobedience when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3–6)

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. (Philippians 4:8)

#### **2. Pray in every temptation, asking for God's power to do His will.**

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. (Romans 12:21)

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Romans 15:13)

#### **3. Resist and rebuke the devil in the name of Jesus. *Fight!***

Yet Michael the archangel, in contending with the devil . . . dared not bring against him a reviling accusation, but said, “The Lord rebuke you!” (Jude 9)

Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God . . . casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. . . . Your adversary the devil walks about like

a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith.  
(1 Peter 5:6–9)

I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices. (2 Corinthians 2:10–11)

God wants you to be victorious. Be aware of the devil’s devices. Unforgiveness is one of his most powerful tactics to keep us in bondage. Jesus showed the importance of using Scripture to combat Satan’s deceptions (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10).

Develop an action plan by using any of the verses above, or the many verses in this study, to combat unbiblical thoughts and to set your mind on God’s perspective. Write a verse on an index card and memorize it by carrying the card with you and reviewing it in the morning and night. Continue to add to your victory kit by memorizing verses. As you pray over and memorize Scripture, you are hiding God’s Word in your heart (Psalm 119:11). This will be your victory.

Quote Scripture to replace evil thoughts, reinforce God’s truth, and answer the Enemy as Jesus did. When Satan brought lies to Jesus, He said, “It is written” (Matthew 4:4, 7), and He quoted Scripture. We must do the same. Truth will *always* prevail.

### **Your Responsibility**

You are only responsible for *your part* of reconciliation. You cannot place any expectations or requirements on the other person. Regardless of the position they take, you must obey God by asking for and giving forgiveness. If they refuse to grant you forgiveness, or they do not acknowledge their wrong toward you, God will still bless you for your obedience and pour out His peace, grace, and mercy upon your life. You will still experience His freedom from bondage.

What does Romans 12:18 say about your part in keeping peace?

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Surrender all to the Lord and trust Him to work in your circumstances. We must not lean on our own understanding but obey and surrender to God and His will. He has given us spiritual laws to govern, protect, and set us free. His Word gives us understanding and instruction about how to follow these laws. Our flesh, pride, and fear may keep us from trusting and obeying God in these situations, but through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can overcome.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,  
And lean not on your own understanding;  
In all your ways acknowledge Him,  
And He shall direct your paths. (Proverbs 3:5–6)

Use the following prayer to guide you:

*Lord Jesus, I pray for the strength to trust You in my circumstances. Help me to remember that I am doing this for You. I do not look to \_\_\_\_\_ for anything but place my life in Your hands. I pray for reconciliation with \_\_\_\_\_, but I know that I can only do my part. I pray for \_\_\_\_\_ to surrender to You, that You might be glorified. I trust you entirely with the results. In Jesus's name I pray. Amen.*

## **Something New**

When you obediently respond to God's commands on forgiveness and reconciliation, your act of forgiving or seeking forgiveness marks the start of something new. We are not computers. There is no "refresh" button or "control-alt-delete" for our minds and behaviors. Maintaining your obedience will require self-control, discipline, and a humble reliance on God and His Word for His transformation to continue to take place in your heart.

## **To the Forgiven**

To humble yourself enough to admit your failures before God and those you have wronged is a beautiful testament of the power of the Holy Spirit's work in your life. But God is not finished with you yet. You may feel the impulse to repeat your offense and continue to hurt others. That is where your fight begins.

## **To the Forgivers**

Reflecting God's heart by letting go of your bitterness and resentment, forgiving the offenses of those who have hurt you, brings honor and glory to the heavenly Father. But God is not finished with you yet. You will be tempted to remember the pain your offender caused. Resentment will try to take root once again in your heart. That is where your fight begins.

## **Living in Victory**

The people you have hurt, or those who have hurt you, may continue to be a regular part of your life. And though God has had a major victory in you, that does not mean that they have changed. They may continue to harbor bitterness and resentment toward you, or they may continue to hurt you. Your flesh will want to react in the same prideful and selfish way it is accustomed to.

Forgiveness can be extremely difficult, but life is harder when we do not forgive because we are harboring sin and missing out on what Jesus did for us on the cross. Our experience of God's forgiveness is directly related to our ability to forgive others. A readiness to forgive others is one indication that you have truly repented of your own sin, surrendered your life, and received God's forgiveness. A surrendered heart toward God cannot be a hard heart toward others.

Pride and fear keep us from forgiveness and reconciliation. Refusing to give in or be broken, insisting on your rights, and defending yourself are all indications that selfish pride is ruling your life, rather than the Lord. When fear of *what if* is consuming and controlling you, pray for the faith to trust and obey God. Enemies are very expensive to keep. An unforgiving spirit will put you in an emotional prison. Do not let Satan keep you from experiencing freedom in Christ.

The first and often the only person to be healed by forgiveness is the person who does the forgiving. . . . When we genuinely forgive, we set a prisoner free and then discover that the prisoner we set free was us. —Lewis Smedes



## Appendix A

### Developing Daily Intimacy with God

The greatest gift received through salvation is the ability to have a close, dependent relationship with God. There is nothing He desires more from you.

#### **Set aside time.**

Choose the best time of day (morning or evening) and commit to a daily devotion with God. Don't set yourself up for discouragement with a goal you will not be able to keep. Start small, and then add time as you grow. Begin with fifteen minutes each day.

#### **Choose a book of the Bible.**

Read one chapter (or less if it is a long chapter) or a few verses, and meditate on it. In addition, you may also want to read from a daily devotional book. See *Appendix B: Recommended Books* for suggestions.

#### **Pray.**

Pray specifically over the truths you have just read. Ask God to reveal how they apply to your life. Pray for the humility to submit yourself to His authority and to respond in obedience.

#### **Listen to Him.**

Spend a few minutes in silence, just listening. This may be uncomfortable at first. We live in a time of constant distractions and are not accustomed to sitting quietly. Persevere and God will be faithful to speak to you. Remember that the Holy Spirit is dwelling in you and can minister to you in your thoughts.

#### **Keep a journal.**

Record your prayers, experiences, ideas, or reflections to keep for private use. Write what verses mean to you and anything the Lord speaks to your heart.

#### **Pray again.**

Be intentional about your prayers. Use the ACTS method to guide you:

A—*Adoration*—Worship and praise God.

C—*Confession*—Confess and repent of any known sins.

T—*Thanksgiving*—Express gratitude for God's blessings in your life.

S—*Supplication*—Humbly make requests for your needs and the needs of others.

Close by asking God to help you to know and acknowledge His presence throughout your day.

## Appendix B

### Recommended Books

While many excellent books are available to deepen your relationship with God, we recommend the following to guide, teach, and challenge you.

#### Discipleship Books

*Christian Foundational Truths: A Strong Foundation for a Disciple* by Craig Caster  
*Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God* by Henry T. Blackaby, Richard Blackaby, and Claude V. King  
*Man to Man* by Charles R. Swindoll  
Marriage Is a Ministry series by Craig Caster  
*Men of Courage: God's Call to Move Beyond the Silence of Adam* by Dr. Larry Crabb  
Parenting Is a Ministry series by Craig Caster  
Understanding Teens series by Craig Caster

#### Devotional Books

*Daily Experience with God* by Andrew Murray  
*Drawing Near: Daily Readings for a Deeper Faith* by John F. MacArthur  
*Every Day with Jesus: First Steps with New Believers* by Greg Laurie  
*Meet the Bible: A Panorama of God's Word in 366 Daily Readings and Reflections* by Brenda Quinn and Philip Yancey  
*Moments Together for Couples* by Dennis and Barbara Rainey  
*My Utmost for His Highest* by Oswald Chambers  
*On the Other Side of the Garden: Biblical Womanhood* by Virginia Ruth Fugate  
*Our Daily Bread*, simple digital and printed devotionals at <https://odb.org/>  
*Self-Confrontation* by John C. Broger  
*Streams in the Desert* by Mrs. Charles E. Cowman  
*The Love Dare Day by Day: A Year of Devotions for Couples* by Stephen and Alex Kendrick  
*The One Year Book of Psalms* by William J. Peterson and Randy Petersen

#### Devotional and Discipleship Resources for Teens

*Bad to the Bone: Fifteen Young Bible Heroes Who Lived Radical Lives for God* by Miles McPherson  
Bible app by YouVersion (available on Apple and Android)  
BibleProject podcasts and videos, <https://bibleproject.com/>  
*Growing Little Women: Capturing Teachable Moments with Your Daughter* by Donna J. Miller, with Linda Holland  
Josh McDowell Daily Devotions, subscribe online at [josh.org/resources/youth-family/daily-devotions/youth/](http://josh.org/resources/youth-family/daily-devotions/youth/)  
*Talksheets* by David Lynn (various books for junior high and high school)  
*Youth Devotions* by Josh McDowell

## **Relationship Books**

*For Men Only* by Shaunti and Jeff Feldhahn

*For Parents Only* by Shaunti Feldhahn and Lisa A. Rice

*For Women Only* by Shaunti Feldhahn

*For Young Men Only* by Jeff Feldhahn and Eric Rice with Shaunti Feldhahn

*For Young Women Only* by Shaunti Feldhahn and Lisa A. Rice

*Lady in Waiting: Becoming God's Best While Waiting for Mr. Right* by Jackie Kendall and Debby Jones

*Praying for Your Future Husband: Preparing Your Heart for His* by Robin Jones Gunn and Tricia Goyer

*The Power of a Praying Wife* by Stormie Omartian

## **About the Author**

A fool. A student with dyslexia. A high school graduate with a third-grade reading level. An ignorant husband and abusive father. All described Pastor Craig Caster at one time in his life, but God had a different plan for him. Despite Craig's fear of public speaking, God called him to full-time ministry in 1994. He stepped out in faith without formal education or a seminary degree. He was ordained in 1995 and has since written four books; disciplined many men; counseled hundreds; led countless to Christ; and taught thousands through marriage and parenting seminars, men's retreats, and pastors' conferences throughout the United States and internationally. All by the grace and power of God.

Although Craig gave His life to Jesus in 1979, his transformation started when he began to abide in Jesus and His Word daily. He truly believes Jesus desires a close relationship with each one of us. His life is forever changed because he pursues this relationship and is completely dependent on Christ.

### **Be Encouraged**

If you are struggling to trust that God can work in and through your life, be encouraged by Pastor Craig's story. Don't let your past sins, learning disabilities, fear of teaching or speaking, or lack of education stop you from being obedient to the call of God on your life. God desires to make you His disciple, and if you are married or have children, He wants to form you into a spouse and parent who honors Him. His grace is amazing and limitless. He loves you and desires to be glorified through you.

### **God's Promise to You**

Thanks be to God for His abundant promises and provision. Meditate on His promises from the words of "Simon Peter, a bondservant and apostle of Jesus Christ."

To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:1-8)

## About Family Discipleship Ministries

Family Discipleship Ministries (FDM), a nonprofit ministry established in 1994 by founder and director Pastor Craig Caster, strives to support, educate, and train the body of Christ to minister to families through a discipleship model. To accomplish this goal, FDM offers workbooks, supporting videos, and online materials for individual study, small groups, home-group study, and one-on-one discipleship. They conduct seminars on discipleship, marriage, and parenting.

FDM's ministry goal is to exhort, train, and equip leaders of Christian churches to develop a vision for discipleship and provide biblically solid workbooks to help them minister to their church families. Since 1995, thousands of people have completed the marriage and parenting classes, and hundreds of churches across the United States and abroad have ministered to their congregations using FDM materials. Their ministry also helps many families through free online resources found at [www.FDM.world](http://www.FDM.world).

FDM actively ministers internationally in countries such as Russia, Ukraine, Cuba, Mexico, Africa, Singapore, Japan, and China. Find out more at [www.FDM.world](http://www.FDM.world).