



Deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay



Read Psalm 130:3-4

DAY 1

This month is all about forgiveness—deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay. Forgiveness doesn't come naturally. When someone does something that hurts us, we want to hurt them back. But forgiveness calls for us to do just the opposite. Why? Because God forgives us!

Figure out the secret message below by writing the NEXT letter of the alphabet that comes after the one printed below. (Hint: for "Z" the next letter would be "A")

ENQFHU D NSGDQR ADBZTRD FNC ENQFHU DR XNT

Thank God for choosing to forgive always because He loves you.

Answer: Forgive others because God forgives you.

Read Matthew 18:32-33

DAY 2

Jesus told a story about a servant who owed a king 10,000 bags of gold. He didn't have the money to repay the debt.

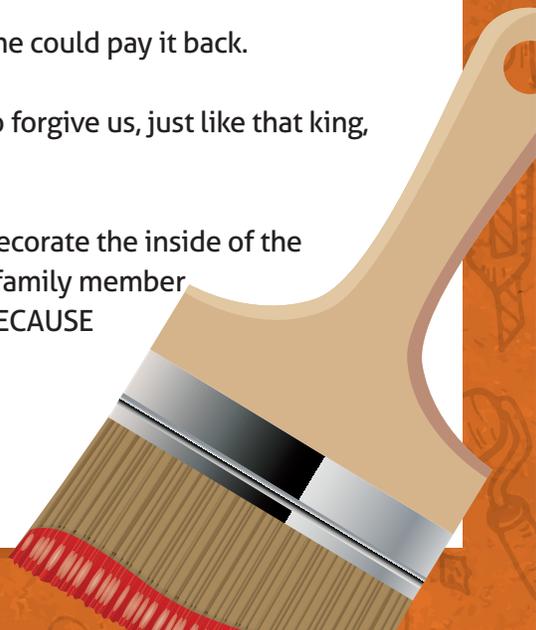
So what did the king do? He forgave the man, cancelling his debt. Then that servant went out and found a man who owed him 100 silver coins. He didn't have the money to repay the debt.

What did that forgiven servant do? He had him thrown in prison until he could pay it back.

When we refuse to forgive, we're just like that servant. God chooses to forgive us, just like that king, when we don't deserve it. We forgive because we've been forgiven.

Write the word "BECAUSE" in large block letters. Decorate the inside of the letters any way you choose. Hang your artwork on the fridge. When a family member asks about it, explain that it's a reminder this week to forgive others BECAUSE God forgives you.

Tell God thank you for choosing to forgive like the king in this story. Ask Him to help you respond with forgiveness.



Read 1 John 1:9

DAY 3

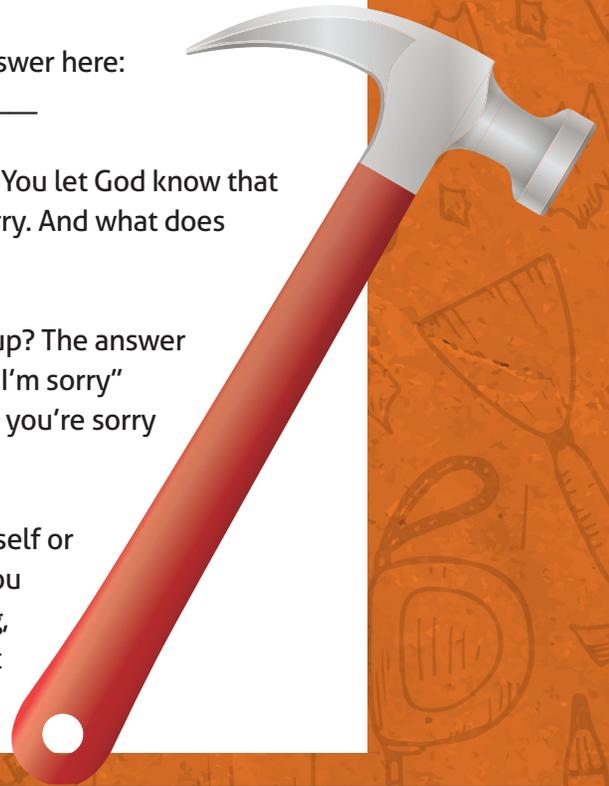
God sent His Son, Jesus, to suffer and die and rise again so that we could be forgiven. When you trust Jesus as your Savior, you become a part of God's family forever. But that doesn't mean you'll stop messing up.

Do you know what the word "confess" means? Write down your answer here:

To "confess" means that when you're wrong, you say you're wrong. You let God know that YOU know you messed up. You tell Him and then you say you're sorry. And what does God do when we admit we're wrong? He forgives. Always.

Maybe you're thinking, but doesn't God already know I've messed up? The answer is "yes, He does" because God knows everything. Just like saying, "I'm sorry" helps fix the problem between you and a friend you've hurt, saying you're sorry to God helps you stay connected to Him.

As you pray today, write down something you've done to hurt yourself or others this week. Tell God how sorry you are and ask Him to help you make a different choice next time. When you're finished confessing, tear up the paper into small pieces and throw it away, knowing that you've been forgiven.



Read Colossians 3:13

DAY 4

When someone hurts you or does something unkind, you could choose to stay mad or as Queen Elsa would say, you could "let it go!" That's what the "put up with one another" part of this verse means. If you chose to stay mad, anger is all you'd have left.

If someone is consistently being unkind, you need to ask a trusted adult for help. But for the everyday mistakes people make, forgiveness is always the wise choice. Remember, God doesn't hold your mess-ups against you. He is always willing to "let it go" when we mess up.

Check out the new lyrics to "Let It Go" below (you can even sing them if you want to). Then pray, thanking God for His willingness to forgive you, always.

**Let it go, let it go
Can't stay mad forevermore
Let it go, let it go
Forgive and open the door.
I don't care if it seems crazy
Let it go and move on
It wasn't really worth it anyway.**



*Forgive others
because God
forgives you.*



FORGIVENESS

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Read Micah 7:18

DAY 1

Imagine if God's love worked like a bank. What if every time you messed up; God took a little bit of love out of your account? What if you had to constantly try to do good things to earn his love back? Wouldn't that be exhausting?

Here's the really good news. God's love doesn't work that way. When you mess up, His love for you doesn't change. God sent Jesus, His only Son, to die on the cross for all the mess-ups, for all the sin of the world, once and for all. God's forgiveness is complete because it came at a great cost. God gave His only Son, Jesus, because of His love for you. When we choose to forgive others, we're showing them God's great love too.

Do you have a friend who needs to know that? Is there someone in your life who doesn't know about God's love and forgiveness? Today, pray that God would help you talk to that friend. Maybe you could invite him to church or show them kindness in some cool way this week so they see a difference in you.

Read Luke 17:3-4

DAY 2

Count to seven on your hands. According to this verse, if someone does something hurtful or unkind seven times but asks each time for forgiveness, what should you do? Choose an answer below:

1. Tell them to get lost
2. Bring up every other time they've messed up to make your point.
3. Say or do something unkind to get even.
4. Refuse to listen or forgive.
5. Tell them you don't believe they're sorry.
6. Ignore them.
7. Forgive, every single time.



Did you choose number seven? When someone messes up and asks you for forgiveness, it's okay to tell them they were wrong and how it hurt. But what's not okay is to refuse to forgive. As a Jesus follower who has already been forgiven, your job is to show that same love and forgiveness to others.

Cross out the first six answers above and write the word "FORGIVE" instead. Spend some time asking God to help you forgive, as many times as you're asked, knowing that when you forgive others, it can change them.

Read Ephesians 4:31-32

DAY 3

Think about the last time you got in a fight with your sibling or best friend. Do you remember what you fought about? Do you remember if one of you "won" the fight? Thinking back, did you do or say anything you didn't mean that you wish you could take back?

According to Paul, who wrote these words in a letter to the church in Ephesus, what should STOP? Yep, all fighting and lying. Don't stay mad. Be kind and tender, which also means careful, and FORGIVE.

Maybe you're reading this thinking: "You don't know what he did!"

Guess what? Forgiveness is still the answer. God doesn't want you to hold onto all that anger. Instead, He wants you to have a conversation, be careful and KIND with your words and then choose forgiveness. Why? Because when you forgive others, it can change them.

To be able to forgive, you really need God's help. Spend some time praying today and reading your Bible verse. Ask God to change your attitude towards your sibling or friend. Thank Him for choosing to forgive you, no matter what. Ask Him to help you forgive too.



Read Proverbs 20:22

DAY 4

Have you ever seen a hamster run around in one of those little wheels? That hamster could run his little legs all day and still be right where he started. While great for getting some exercise, everybody knows that hamster wheels won't actually take you anywhere. Trying to get even is just like being stuck on a hamster wheel.

Let's say your sister says something mean. That makes you mad so you say something mean back. Then your sister gets madder, so she says something meaner back to you. And on and on that "getting even" hamster wheel goes. Until that cycle is broken, you'll never get anywhere.

God has a better way. Instead of getting even, God wants you to trust Him to do what only He can do so you don't get stuck. It's God who changes our hearts and He is the only one who can make things right.

Jog in place as you read the words of today's verse out loud. Ask God to help you forgive, knowing that when you do, it can change people.

*When you
forgive
others, it can
change them.*





FORGIVENESS

Deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay

Read Colossians 1:14

DAY 1

This passage talks about who? Yes, Jesus! God sent His only Son, Jesus, to do what no one else could do. He willingly faced the worst punishment of all, death on a cross, for you and for me. Why? So that we could be forgiven.

Grab some masking tape and a piece of paper. Use the masking tape to create a cross in the center of the page. Use a crayon or marker to color the page any way you choose. When finished, remove the tape in the center to reveal the cross. Then, write today's verse inside the cross, filling in the blanks as indicated below.

"Because of what Jesus has done, _____ has been set free. Because of Jesus, all
Your name
my sins have been forgiven." Colossians 1:14

Have you heard this good news before? Do you understand why Jesus chose to give His life so that you could be forgiven? If not, ask your parent or another trusted adult who follows God about what Jesus has done. Pray that God would help you follow Him and trust in Jesus so that you can be forgiven.



Read Romans 3:23

DAY 2

Grab a piece of paper and draw a target on the center. Wad up a few pieces of paper to use as your "darts." Hang up the target and stand several feet away. See if you can hit the target right in the center, standing in the exact same spot, 15 times in a row. Probably pretty difficult, right?

Sin is a little word that causes a lot of big problems. To sin means to miss the mark. Sin isn't just a problem for you, it's a problem for everyone. Imagine if God said, "Hey, if you want to have a relationship with me, then you need to hit the bullseye every single time." That would be like God saying, "If you want to have a relationship with me, you have to be perfect."

Guess what? No one can measure up to God's glory and perfection. But God loves you. He sent Jesus to die on the cross so that you can be forgiven.

Take a look at your dart board. Ask God to help you accept the forgiveness He offers when you miss the mark. Thank Him for sending Jesus so that you could be forgiven.

Read Ephesians 2:4-5

DAY 3

Grab a piece of foil from the kitchen. Crumple it into a ball and then spread it back out on the counter. Can you make it look as shiny and smooth as it did before? Nope! This is kind of how our lives look when we mess up. Remember, everyone messes up. It's not just you. We all look like that crumpled up piece of foil.

God knows that no matter how hard we might try, we can never fix all those mess-ups on our own. **But God LOVES us deeply.** He is full of mercy. God sent Jesus so that our sins, our mess-ups, could be forgiven. His grace, which we cannot earn and do not deserve, has saved us. That's how BIG God's love is for you and for me.

Grab a ball point pen and draw a large heart in the center of your piece of foil. Use the pen to create a cool design inside the heart, creating ridges in the foil. Color in your design with permanent markers. Hang your heart in a place where you'll see it each day.

Tell God thank you for loving you so much that He sent His only Son so that everyone can be forgiven.

Read Acts 10:43

DAY 4

Think about the last time someone hurt you. How did you respond? Did you say something unkind back? Are you still mad?

Do you see the word "all" in today's verse? It comes up twice. First, it talks about how *all* the prophets, (men chosen by God to deliver an important message) tell us about Jesus. And all who believe in Him will be forgiven.

"All" includes the kid you still haven't forgiven. All includes your parents, your teachers, your favorite coach, and your grandparents. All includes the kids no one talks to and the kids everyone wants to hang out with. All includes you. God loves you so much and His forgiveness is SO big that it covers everything.

Everyone needs forgiveness. God sent His only Son, to die and be buried and rise again so that our sin, the mess ups we all make, would no longer separate us from Him. As you pray today, thank God for the forgiveness He offers to everyone. Ask Him to help you choose to forgive, because everyone needs forgiveness.



FORGIVENESS

Deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay

Read Luke 6:37

DAY 1

If we're not careful, we can spend all our time pointing out other people's mistakes instead of taking a long hard look at our own behavior. Once you start judging and blaming, pretty soon you realize you're just as imperfect too.

But remember, the answer is forgiveness! Forgiveness is deciding someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay. It's a choice. When you refuse to forgive, when you choose to stay angry, you miss out.

Here's your challenge this week. When you find yourself about to blame or judge someone else, stop yourself. Hold your tongue. Don't even let the words come out of your mouth. Make a decision to let it go so you don't miss out.

This will definitely require God's help! As you pray today, ask God to help you remember that you're not perfect. Tell Him that you love Him and ask God to help you forgive so you don't miss out this week.

Read Hebrews 10:30

DAY 2

What are some chores you're responsible for around your house?

What are some chores your mom or dad are responsible for?

According to this verse, whose job is it to judge? Is it yours? Nope, it's God's job. When someone says or does something unkind, you could choose to stay mad. Or you could choose to let God be the judge. It's His job anyway.

God sees and knows all. You can talk to Him and tell Him why you're mad and ask Him to help you decide to forgive. As you pray today, tell God why you're angry or sad. Talk about what happened and how you want to forgive but it's hard. Ask Him to do His job (the judging part) and help you do yours (the forgiving part) so you don't miss out.



Read Matthew 6:14

DAY 3

Riding a bike
Tying your shoes
Reading aloud
Meeting an adult
Walking into a new classroom

Do you know what all these things have in common? They're all things that at one time seemed scary or hard. But once you practiced a little, they're not so bad! The best way to get better at anything is to practice. It's the same with forgiveness. The more you make the choice to forgive, the easier it will become. And, the more you model forgiveness, the more likely the people around you are to forgive too. Don't you want to hang out with friends that choose to forgive?

Ask your mom or dad to tell you about a time when they chose to forgive someone as a kid even when it was really hard. What happened? How did practicing forgiveness in that example help them become better at forgiving the next time?

Thank God for the reminder today that forgiveness takes practice! Ask God to help you choose to forgive this week so you don't miss out.

*When you
don't forgive,
you miss out.*



Read Zechariah 7:9

DAY 4

Today's verse includes some big words that need defining!

Justice – the quality of being just, impartial, or fair

Mercy – compassion or patience shown to an offender (someone who has wronged you)

God is asking us to treat others with fairness. To show love and compassion and patience to one another, even those who hurt us. Why? Because that's exactly how God treats us! He treats us fairly. He is loving and patient and kind, always.

In the space below, rewrite today's verse in your own words. Feel free to use the words in the definitions above or to look up the verse in different translations. You could even go

BibleGateway.com (with an adult's permission) to read this verse in different translations.

Read the words you've written today as a prayer to God, asking Him to help you choose forgiveness so you don't miss out!