

DAY 6

Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

1 Thessalonians 5:15 NIV

In ancient times, people operated with a payback mindset. That just means if someone hurt you, you could hurt them back. You could do to others what was done to you. In other words, it was all about revenge. While that may sound extreme, so many of us live with the same mindset. While we may never actually act on it—we may never pay back wrong with wrong—we certainly want to! Paul, the writer of this verse, reminds us that God calls us to something different: to do what is good. When we choose goodness over payback, we're not only helping ourselves move on, but we're choosing God's best for our lives, too.

Talk with your small group leader this week about what it might look like for you to choose to do what is good toward someone instead of getting payback.

DAY 7

Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

Colossians 3:13 NLT

Memorizing God's Word takes the guessing out of what God wants us to do. The more we read and know what God says, the better we'll know how God wants us to live. And who doesn't want that?

Grab a notebook or journal. Each day this week, write this entire verse. Try to write the first few words without looking. Then, the next day, try to write a few more. Keep going until you reach seven days. By the end of the week, try writing the verse as many times as you can by memory.

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR AN
everyday faith.

MOVING ON / WEEK 1

MIDDLE SCHOOL

DAY 1

For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard.

Romans 3:23 NLT

Fact: We're all going to make mistakes. Everyone is going to mess up. Everyone is going to hurt someone else. Because we're human! And while forgiving others for what they've done wrong or even receiving forgiveness from others when we've done something wrong isn't a quick fix, it is something we can trust will help make our lives better. Forgiveness takes time, but with God, we are able to move on. God knows we're all going to mess up, over and over again. But God also loves us enough to make forgiveness possible, over and over again.

Memorize this verse this week as a reminder that we're all going to need forgiveness and we all have it available to us through the God who loves us.

DAY 2

But I [Jesus] say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!

Matthew 5:44 NLT

If there is one person who was mistreated a lot, it was Jesus. He was betrayed, abandoned, beaten, and even killed. And yet, Jesus still had love and forgiveness for each and every person who treated Him poorly. So, when we read Jesus' command here to love and pray for the people who hurt us, we can listen to it, knowing that Jesus was speaking from experience. When we choose to love, pray for, and even forgive those who have mistreated us, we're making a choice to live more like Jesus Himself.

Is there someone you've been hurt by? Take Jesus' words seriously when it comes to that person. Pray for them, asking that they would learn from their mistakes and that you would find a way to forgive them. And remember, it's okay to speak up! Talk to a trusted adult today if you're experiencing harm from someone else. You are not alone!

DAY 3

Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven.
Luke 6:37 NLT

When someone hurts you, what's the first thing you want to do? For most of us, the answer is simple: get them back. We want to do to others what's been done to us. But today's verse reminds us that there's a better way. When we hurt or wrong someone to get payback for what they've done to us, the cycle doesn't end. But when we choose to forgive? Well, not only are we breaking the cycle and letting go of anger and pain, but we're also acting out of the forgiveness we've already received from God. We forgive, not because it's easy to do, but because we know we've been forgiven, too.

Make a list of people you want get back at right now. Then, over each of their names, write the word "forgiven" as a step toward moving on.

DAY 4

But the Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him.
Daniel 9:9 NLT

Forgiving other people isn't easy. When our best friend lies to us, or our siblings hurt our feelings, or our parent disappoints us, forgiving, showing kindness, and moving on seems like an impossible thing to do. That's when remembering all that God has done for us can be helpful. When we mess up, God forgives. When we make a mistake, God shows kindness. And no matter what, God loves us. Remembering that truth will help us show the same kind of mercy and forgiveness to people in our lives who need it, too.

Pray today that God would remind you of the love and forgiveness that's been given to you. Then, ask God to help you show the same to someone else this week.

DAY 5

Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.
Ephesians 4:32 NLT

Written by Madeline, age 18 from Chalfont, Pennsylvania, USA

Forgiveness. It's something everyone has needed at some point in their life. I know I have! Forgiveness is deciding to let go of negative feelings toward someone who hurt you. And when we do something to hurt someone else, we hope to receive forgiveness from the person we hurt, too. The good news is that before you or I ever needed forgiveness, Jesus died so that we could receive it. No matter how big or small, God gave us Jesus to forgive everything we'd ever need forgiven. That's a big deal! Because we get to experience this forgiveness every day, God wants us to share it with the people around us. When your siblings mess with your stuff, or when your friends argue with you, or when your classmates hurt your feelings, it

can be hard to let go of your anger. You may want them to "get what they deserve" or feel the pain they put you through. But when God forgave us, God didn't give us what we deserve. Instead, God chose to give us forgiveness, even though we didn't deserve it. So we can do the same for others!

Take a moment to pray and thank God for the forgiveness God gave you.

Then, ask God to help you show others that same forgiveness when they disappoint or let you down this week.

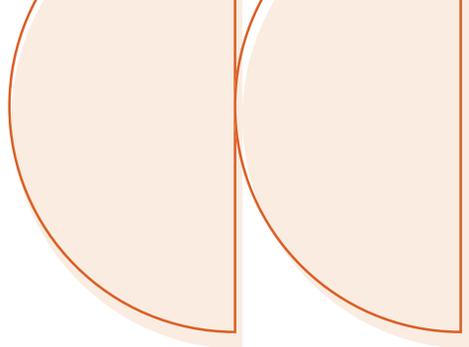
DAY 6

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

Romans 5:8 NLT

Have you ever been able to forgive someone before they apologized? That takes a huge amount of strength! And it's exactly what Jesus did for us. Jesus loved us so much that He didn't wait for us to get it right or have it all together. As a matter of fact, Jesus died to forgive us even while we didn't deserve it. Jesus' love made the first move to forgive, and that should inspire us to make the first move to forgive ourselves.

Are you struggling to forgive yourself? What hurts or mistakes or mess ups are you having a hard time moving on from? Pray today that you will remember and experience Jesus' forgiveness in a real way so that you can forgive yourself, too.



DAY 7

Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

Colossians 3:13 NLT

When we're struggling to see ourselves the way God sees us, God's Word can help. Having it in our hearts and minds is a great way to be reminded of the truth we need to hear about who we are and how God feels about us.

So, ask your small group leader for help! Text, DM, or even email the verse to your leader every day this week. Try to write it without looking, even if it's not exactly right. Have your small group leader send back any corrections to what you wrote. Keep going this week until you're able to write the verse completely correct from memory!

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MOVING ON / WEEK 2

MIDDLE SCHOOL

DAY 1

The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.
1 Samuel 16:7b NLT

If we're honest, we'd all admit that forgiveness can be hard. It's difficult to move on when someone hurts us. And when we're the ones who do something wrong? Well, forgiving ourselves can be even more difficult! In both cases, it's important to remember that God's way is so much better than our way. Why? Because God knows what we don't know and sees what we can't see. God loves us and sees more than our mistakes. And when we can see others and ourselves the way God sees us all, we'll find forgiveness to be much easier.

Talk with your small group leader this week about how seeing yourself and others the way God sees you can help you forgive and move on.

DAY 2

If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you.
Matthew 6:14 NLT

No matter who you are or what you've done, it's important to remember that we all need forgiveness. We all need to receive it, and we all need to give it. But the good news is, because of Jesus, forgiveness is always ours to give and take. Jesus has made a way for us to receive the ultimate forgiveness, and because of that, we can extend that same forgiveness to both others and ourselves.

Today, ask yourself if there is someone you need to forgive. Maybe it's someone else, or maybe it's even you. Then, pray that you would be able to give that forgiveness easily. Because Jesus has already forgiven us, we can find the freedom to move on.

DAY 3

Though we are overwhelmed by our sins, you forgive them all.

Psalm 65:3 NLT

When we focus on our mistakes, we can become discouraged or even hopeless at times. It can almost seem as if we'll never get it right! Rather than focus on your mistakes or missteps, focus instead on the thing God gives us to make it better: forgiveness. Even though our mistakes might feel overwhelming, God's forgiveness is bigger. And when we feel the most defeated when we make a mistake, God's forgiveness is still there to cover all our sins. The next time you're feeling discouraged, remember that God's forgiveness is greater than your mistakes, and there's nothing you can do to separate from that love.

Take a moment to thank God for the unconditional love you've received!

DAY 4

O Lord, you are so good, so ready to forgive, so full of unfailing love for all who ask for your help.

Psalm 86:5 NLT

Did you know that God is eager to forgive you? That simply means that God is excited, thrilled, and happy to forgive you! So much so, that God sent Jesus to make that forgiveness possible for us. We can't earn it. We can't lose it. All we have to do is accept it. We don't have to hold on to the things we've done wrong or the ways we've messed up. After all, God doesn't, so why should we? Instead, we can find freedom and unfailing love when we receive the forgiveness God wants to give us.

Take a moment and say out loud, "I accept your forgiveness, God." Let it be the first step in letting go and moving on from your mistakes.

DAY 5

He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.

Ephesians 1:7 NLT

Written by Sam, age 14 from Burke, Virginia, USA

Have you ever done something that hurt someone else? Or said something you wished you had never said in the first place? Chances are most people have! But the good thing is, no matter what it is, God forgives. God will always forgive us for what we've done even when we don't deserve it. God doesn't hold grudges and won't try to get back at us for something we did. God forgives us because God is so kind and good.

Are you holding onto something that you need to forgive yourself for? Think of what that thing is in your own life right now. Got it?

No matter what it is, remember that you can forgive yourself because God has already forgiven you.

Take a minute and pray to God, giving thanks for forgiving you and ask God to help you forgive yourself this week, too.

DAY 6

Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs.

Proverbs 10:12 NIV

What are some conflicts that you're dealing with right now? Are you fighting with a friend? In a disagreement with a teammate? Arguing with your family? Whenever conflict shows up in our lives, we might struggle to know how to deal with it and move on. This Proverb gives us the answer: love. One of the best ways to move on from hurt and resolve conflict is with love.

Is there someone you're having an argument or disagreement with right now? Consider how you can use love, in even the smallest way, to help resolve the conflict and move on.

Maybe it's a simple prayer, or offering an apology, or talking to someone you can trust for help. Whatever it is, take a step toward love to resolve the conflict this week.

DAY 7

Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

Colossians 3:13 NLT

Forgiveness isn't easy on our own, is it? That's why it's so important to have God's help in taking steps to forgive those who hurt you. Memorizing God's Word is a great step toward doing just that!

Write this verse on a notecard and tape it to the inside of your locker or your book. Every time you change classes or open that book, take a second to read it. By the end of the week, try to say it out loud to yourself from memory!

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MOVING ON / WEEK 3

MIDDLE SCHOOL

DAY 1

Even if that person wrongs you seven times a day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, you must forgive.

Luke 17:4 NLT

If someone hurts you over and over again, it can be difficult to move forward, can't it? Sure, they keep apologizing, but nothing changes. That certainly makes forgiveness not so easy to give. But here, Jesus commands us to forgive every time someone asks. Of course, that feels impossible, but remember, everything is possible with God. Asking for God's guidance and help to move forward is the only way we can forgive, again and again and again, for as long as it takes to move on in a healthy way.

So why not start now? If you're having a hard time letting go of something, pray that God will help you forgive today. Then, keep praying for the strength to move on. And finally, if you find yourself in a harmful situation, know that part of moving on is speaking up and making a change. So, ask God for the strength to help you take a step toward sharing with someone you trust this week.

DAY 2

Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty of our sins.

Romans 3:23-24 NLT

One of the best things about forgiveness is that it sets us free. From what? Well, from anger, guilt, frustration, sadness, shame, and so much more. When we receive forgiveness, we're set free from our mistakes, wrongs, and missteps. And when we choose to forgive, we are free from the frustration and hurt we're carrying. It may not happen right away, but when we take our hurts and pain to God, we can trust that eventually the forgiveness Jesus came to offer us will help us forgive others, too.

What would forgiveness free you from right now? Write it down and share it with your small group leader. Ask them to encourage you to receive the forgiveness God offers you so that you can move forward and move on.

DAY 3

Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

Romans 12:18 NLT

What should you do to live in peace with other people? As Paul wrote: “All that you can.” That sounds like a lot, doesn’t it? Surely that doesn’t mean we just forgive and forget? Forgiving and finding peace doesn’t mean we return to relationships that aren’t good for us or let people keep hurting us. But it does mean we do our part to find the peace that only God gives us and to show that same peace to others when we can. We can offer forgiveness and find good ways to move forward. And we can do our best not to hurt or harm others along the way.

Is there a relationship in your life that needs peace? Pray that God would show you what it looks like to do all that you can for peace, both for yourself and the other person, this week.

DAY 4

But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too.

Mark 11:25 NLT

Jesus’ words here are so important. When we receive God’s forgiveness for our mistakes and mess ups, it gives us the ability to forgive others for their mistakes and mess ups, too. In other words, just as much as we have been forgiven, we have to forgive others. We can’t simply receive God’s forgiveness and love without giving the same back to others. When we find the freedom to forgive ourselves because of Jesus’ forgiveness, the best thing we can do is to forgive others, too.

Try writing a letter to someone you need to forgive. You can even write the letter to yourself! The goal isn’t to give the letter to anyone; it’s simply to practice showing the forgiveness that Jesus offers us all.

DAY 5

The faithful love of the Lord never ends! His mercies never cease. Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each morning.

Lamentations 3:22-23 NLT

Written by Christian, age 18 from Cumming, Georgia, USA

Fact: If you’re human, you are going to mess up and make mistakes. Everyone will actually! It’s just a part of life. You might say something mean to your friend that you probably shouldn’t have. You might forget to clean your room after your parent has asked you to several times. You might not follow directions on a school project and get a bad grade on it. The good news is that when you choose to follow Jesus, the story doesn’t end when you mess up or make a mistake. That’s because God sent Jesus to Earth to forgive us of anything we’ll ever do—forever! Because of Jesus, we have a chance to start over every single morning, no matter what we’ve done. Because of Jesus, we are forgiven! And that’s something to celebrate!

Right now, write down, “Today is a new day. I can start over.”

Today, talk to a friend or adult you trust about this very thing.