

# LOVE IS FORGIVING

## 40 Days of Love

### WEEK 4

Today we're going to look at the ultimate test of love. The ultimate test of love is when somebody hurts you.

How do you respond?  
Do you have a grudge?  
Do you get resentful?  
Do you get full of bitterness?  
How do you handle when somebody hurts you?

#### **MEMORY VERSE FOR THE WEEK**

*Love doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do.*

**1 Corinthians 13:5**

In other words, love doesn't store up hurt.

## **MONDAY**

**Love should be the response to Jesus' forgiveness**

*But anyone who has been forgiven for only a little will show only a little love.*

**Luke 7:47 (CEV)**

**Overflowing love is the natural response to forgiveness and the appropriate consequence of faith. But only those who realize the depth of their sin can appreciate the complete forgiveness God offers them. Jesus has rescued all of his followers, whether they were once extremely wicked or conventionally good, from eternal death. Do you appreciate the wideness of God's mercy? Are you grateful for his forgiveness?**

What is the correlation between forgiveness and love?  
How do you normally respond to someone who hurts you?

*So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and suddenly remember that a friend has something against you, [24] leave your sacrifice there beside the altar and go and apologize and be reconciled to him, and then come and offer your sacrifice to God.*

**Matthew 5:23-24 (Living)**

How important is your forgiveness to worship?  
Do you obey God immediately when he prompts you to reconcile a relationship before you further your intimacy with God?  
What kind of result did you experience when you returned to worship?

**Worship (Magnification)** - What pleases God more: burnt offerings and sacrifices or obedience to his voice? It is better to obey than to sacrifice. Such simple acts as telling the truth, being kind, encouraging and forgiving other's all bring a smile to God's face.

## TUESDAY

### Steer away from holding a grudge

*If you kept record of our sins, no one could last long. [4] But you forgive us, and so we will worship you.*

**Psalm 130:3-4 (CEV)**

**Keeping a record of sins (or holding a grudge) is like building a wall between you and another person, and it is nearly impossible to talk openly while the wall is there. God doesn't keep a record of our sins; when he forgives, he forgives completely, tearing down any wall between us and him. Therefore, we fear (revere) God, yet we can talk to him about anything. When you pray, realize that God is holding nothing against you. His lines of communication are completely open.**

*Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God has forgiven you because you belong to Christ.*

**Ephes. 4:32 (Living)**

According to these two verses, what are the primary benefits for not holding a grudge?  
What hurts do you need to surrender to God to gain forgiveness?  
Out of your forgiveness, who do you need to forgive?

*I have sinned against you, especially you. I have done what you consider evil. So you hand down justice when you speak, and you are blameless when you judge.*

**Psalm 51:4 (GW)**

**The primary significance of fellowship is intimacy and bonding with God. Your own anger, hurt, and bitterness is your own choice.**

When you hurt another person, whose fellowship is affected?  
Do you regularly try to protect the fellowship you have with God and other believers?

**Fellowship** - If you want God's blessing on your life and you want to be known as a child of God, you must learn to be a peacemaker. Jesus said, "God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God." Notice Jesus didn't say, "blessed are the peace lovers," because everyone loves peace. Neither did he say "blessed are the peaceable," who are never disturbed by anything. Jesus said, "Blessed are those who work for peace" – those who actively seek to resolve conflict. Peacemakers are rare because peacemaking is hard work.

## WEDNESDAY

### Surrender any feelings of resentment to God

*Never desire to take your neighbor's household away from him. "Never desire to take your neighbor's wife, his male or female slave, his ox, his donkey, or anything else that belongs to him.*

**Exodus 20:17 (GW)**

**To covet is to wish to have the possessions of others. It goes beyond simply admiring someone else's possessions or thinking, "I'd like to have one of those." Coveting includes envy—resenting the fact that others have what you don't. God knows, however, that possessions never make anyone happy for long. Since only God can supply all our needs, true contentment is found only in him. When you begin to covet, try to determine if a more basic need is leading you to envy. For example, you may covet someone's success, not because you want to take it away from him, but because you would like to feel as appreciated by others as he is. If this is the case, pray that God will help you deal with your resentment and meet your basic needs.**

Do you covet anything from anyone?  
What effect does your resentment have on your spiritual growth?  
In what area of your life do you most often find resentment?

*But when the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.*

**Galatians 5:22-23 (NLT)**

**Fruit always matures and ripens slowly. God develops the fruit of the Spirit in your life by allowing you to experience circumstances in which you're tempted to express the exact opposite quality! Character development always involves a choice, and temptation provides that opportunity.**

In what areas of your life do you have difficulty resisting temptation?  
What habit in your life threatens your spiritual maturity?

**Discipleship (Maturity)** - Problems force us to look to God and depend on him instead of ourselves. You'll never know that God is all you need until God is all you've got. Regardless of the cause, none of your problems could happen without God's permission. Everything that happens to a child of God is Father-filtered, and he intends to use it for good even when Satan and others mean it for bad.

## **THURSDAY**

### **Make lemonade from your lemons**

*Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. [13] As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. [14] Because of my chains, most of the brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.*

**Philip. 1:12-14 (NIV)**

**Being imprisoned would cause many people to become bitter or to give up, but Paul saw it as one more opportunity to spread the Good News of Christ. Paul realized that his current circumstances weren't as important as what he did with them. Turning a bad situation into a good one, he reached out to the Roman soldiers who made up the palace guard and encouraged those Christians who were afraid of persecution. We may not be in prison, but we still have plenty of opportunities to be discouraged—times of indecision, financial burdens, family conflict, church conflict, or the loss of our jobs. How we act in such situations will reflect what we believe. Like Paul, look for ways to**

**demonstrate your faith even in bad situations. Whether or not the situation improves, your faith will grow stronger.**

How often does your family see the love of Christ in your disappointments?  
Do co-workers see your attitude in anger or patience as good or bad?

*Make sure that everyone has kindness from God so that bitterness doesn't take root and grow up to cause trouble that corrupts many of you.*

**Hebrews 12:15 (GW)**

What can you do to ensure bitterness does not take root in your heart?  
Why should unbelievers witness the kindness of God in your life?  
How does bitterness corrupt the intimacy of family unity?  
What has God taught you from failure?

**Evangelism (Mission)** - Your mission is a continuation of Jesus' mission on earth. Your mission is so significant that Jesus repeated it five times, in five different ways, in five different books of the Bible. Your mission is a wonderful privilege. Your mission involves two great privileges: working with God and representing him.

## **FRIDAY**

**Be swift to hear and slow to speak**

Love does not keep a record of wrongs. Do you?  
Do you hold other believers mistakes against them?  
Can you serve in a ministry with someone who has hurt you in the past?

*Think of yourselves the way Christ Jesus thought of himself.*

**Philip. 2:5 (Msg)**

*But because my servant Caleb has a different attitude and has wholeheartedly followed me, I'll bring him to the land he already explored. His descendants will possess it.*

**Numbers 14:24 (GW)**

What does the heart of a servant look like?  
What is the advantage to wholeheartedly following Christ?

*If someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life.*

**Matthew 5:41 (Msg)**

How do you respond when someone treats you like a servant?  
How do you treat a family member who takes advantage of your servant's heart?

**Ministry (Service)** - The one thing required of such servants is that they be faithful to their master. Thinking like a servant is difficult because it challenges the basic problem of my life: I am by nature selfish. Self-denial is the core of Servanthood. Servants think life stewards not owners.