

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

Every day, and every moment of our lives, we are making decisions that shape the kind of people we ultimately become- vengeful, forgiving, or something in between. What we put into our lives shapes us. When we practice choosing love, we have love to give others. But, when we hold on to vengefulness, it can eat away at the love in our lives and tempt us to choose retribution. If you continue to make deposits of love in your life, no matter how challenging a situation, you will find love to give out to others.

Today, do one thing that stores up love for others. You can memorize scripture about loving others, look for ways to serve someone, or get creative. Just try it today.

DAY 7

Memory Verse: 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

Committing scripture to memory is a way to carry with you a secret weapon for life's battles. God wants you to win in life, and God gave us Scripture to help us be victorious. When you remember God's word, you are essentially following the words found in Psalm 119:11, "I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you". Take some time to fill your spiritual arsenal with the words of Colossians 3:13.

Here are some suggestions to help you memorize this verse:

- 1. Write it down on a sticky note and placing it in a location that you will pass every day.**
- 2. Grab a friend to learn the verse with you. Take turns reciting it each day to keep each other accountable to learning it.**

DAILY DEVOTIONAL

FOR AN
everyday faith.

BITTERSWEET / WEEK 1

HIGH SCHOOL

DAY 1

Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs.
Proverbs 10:12 NIV

Love is the most powerful force in the world, and of all the words that could be used to describe what God is like, the apostle John chose "love". Our experience with the forgiving nature of God gives us an example of perfect love. And the power of love is encompassed by what this proverb says- love can overshadow even the biggest wrongs. When you have love for someone, you seek resolution over conflict. While hate looks for an opportunity to discard what has been broken; love desires to re-build relationships to be stronger than they were before the break.

Ask God to fill you with the love that represents God's character so that you can overpower the feelings of hatred that may try to enter your life.

DAY 2

But I [Jesus] say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!
Matthew 5:44 NLT

Of all the things Jesus talked about, the idea of loving our enemies may be the hardest to do. It's no task to love people who are easy to get along with, or those who have never done anything wrong to us, but here, Jesus gives us a commandment that challenges us to love everybody, even our enemies. How do we do this? We can remember that just because someone has decided that they want to be your enemy, doesn't mean you have to be theirs. You can decide today to show God's love to everyone you come in contact with, no matter their actions. When you love in this way it becomes just a little easier to forgive people.

Who do you find hard to love? Here's a challenge: Pray for them by name today.

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

Judgement and condemnation are two words with something in common. Both involve drawing a final conclusion about someone. The problem with judging and condemning the people in our lives, is that it doesn't leave room in our minds for them to change. We all need space to grow, and to give the next version of ourselves a chance to do better without being judged by the mistakes of yesterday. The best way for us to do this for others is to consider how much space or time you've needed (or would want from others) to grow beyond your own mistakes, and then offer that same time and space to others to forgive themselves and make improvements.

What would it look like to replace judgement and condemnation with love and grace toward someone today?

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

Forgiveness is something we have to practice our entire life. However, the difficulty of granting forgiveness increases, like a Mario game. It may start as someone simply forgiving their sibling for breaking a toy, but as we get older slights against us increase in complexity. As we get older, and conflicts become more hurtful, forgiveness often becomes more difficult. People wonder, "Why should I forgive?" While this is an understandable question, when we don't forgive, like a game of Mario, we get stuck on that same level with poisonous mushrooms, and tunnel pitfalls. We become bitter or angry, which keeps us from moving forward because we are focused on the past. To meet our full potential and the next exciting levels God has planned, we must learn to forgive.

Today, if you feel bitter, ask God to help you forgive so you can keep moving forward.

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 Chloe, age 14

From Lilburn, Georgia

Have you ever been in an argument with a friend or family member? If you are like me, you have. In the last 14 years, I've had several arguments with myself, friends, and family members. One that was particularly difficult was when my friend accused me of doing something I didn't do. We were arguing back and forth and it was this huge deal. Thankfully everything was resolved in the end. The person apologized, and I forgave them. Because of that forgiveness, we are still great friends to this day. That's why forgiveness is so important in life. If you don't forgive, you risk losing the most important people in your life. Believe me, often it hurts worse to not forgive someone than it does to forgive them.

Forgiveness is like kindness. Also, I think it takes a lot more work to

be cruel than it does to be kind. That is why I feel the world has a greater number of compassionate people, than cruel people. So, in the future when your brother or sister is annoying, or you get in an argument with a friend try to be compassionate and forgiving because it will take you a long way.

This week, if you find yourself holding a grudge, talk to God about what it would look like to take a step towards forgiveness this week.