

## LESSONS LEARNED

### Day 3: The Lesson of Forgiveness

**Scripture:** *"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."* — Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)

#### Reflection:

Forgiveness. Just the word can stir up old wounds, deep hurts, or painful memories. If you've lived long enough, someone has wronged you—lied to you, betrayed your trust, spoken words that cut like a knife. And sometimes, it's not just what happened—it's *who* did it.

Let's be honest: forgiveness is hard. It feels unnatural. Everything in us wants justice, an apology, an explanation, or maybe just a chance to be heard. But Jesus calls us to something radical—something holy: *forgive as I have forgiven you*.

Forgiveness isn't saying "it's okay" when it's not. It's not pretending you weren't hurt. It's not denying the pain or avoiding the process. Forgiveness is making the decision—sometimes daily—not to be chained to that offense anymore. It's giving your wound to God and allowing Him to heal it in a way you never could on your own.

I remember wrestling with forgiveness in a season when someone close to me caused deep, ongoing pain. I wanted to move on, but every time I thought about the situation, anger boiled up. I didn't want to forgive—I wanted to *feel* better. But God showed me something: the longer I held onto the hurt, the longer I stayed trapped. Forgiveness wasn't about letting them off the hook—it was about setting *me* free.

And isn't that just like Jesus? He didn't wait until we deserved forgiveness. He gave it while we were still guilty. He loved us at our worst. And He asks

us to extend that same mercy—not because people deserve it, but because we have received it.

Forgiveness is a process, and that's okay. Sometimes it happens in one moment. Other times, it's a decision we make over and over until the feeling finally follows. But each step of forgiveness draws us closer to the heart of God. And with every offense we release, we gain a little more peace, a little more healing, and a little more freedom.

### **Reflection Questions:**

1. Who do you need to forgive today—someone else or maybe even yourself?
2. What emotions or fears are making forgiveness difficult?
3. How does remembering God's forgiveness toward you change the way you view forgiving others?
4. What would it look like to take one small step toward forgiveness today?
5. Can you recall a time when forgiveness brought unexpected peace or healing?

### **Prayer:**

Lord, I bring You the people and the pain that have been hard to release. I know I can't forgive in my own strength—so I ask for Your help. Soften my heart and remind me of the grace You continually pour out on me. Help me to forgive, not because they earned it, but because You've already shown me how. Amen.