

BAGGAGE CLAIM: FINDING FREEDOM IN CHRIST

Day Three: Handing Back Bitterness and Unforgiveness

Scripture: *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”* – Ephesians 4:31-32

Some baggage is heavier than any suitcase we can carry. Bitterness and unforgiveness weigh us down like bricks in a backpack. Every time we replay a hurt or rehearse an offense, it's like adding another stone. Before long, the load becomes so crushing that we can hardly move forward.

Here's the hard truth: unforgiveness doesn't punish the other person—it punishes us. It keeps us stuck in the past, chained to the pain, while the other person may go on living untouched. Carrying bitterness is like dragging someone else's suitcase through the airport while they walk freely with nothing in their hands.

But forgiveness doesn't mean pretending the hurt didn't happen or saying what was done was okay. Forgiveness is releasing the right to revenge, letting go of the weight, and placing the matter in God's hands. It's saying: *“I will not carry this bag anymore—it's too heavy for me. Lord, it's Yours now.”* Notice what Paul says: “Get rid of all bitterness.” That's intentional language. We don't wait for the baggage to magically disappear; we make the choice to release it. Just as Jesus forgave us completely, He calls us to release others—because forgiveness sets *us* free.

Reflection:

- Is there someone you're still carrying in your heart through bitterness or unforgiveness?
- What "stones" of anger, hurt, or resentment are weighing down your spiritual backpack?
- What step can you take today toward laying down that load—praying for them, writing a letter (even if you never send it), or simply asking God to give you the desire to forgive?

Challenge: Write the name of the person who hurt you on a piece of paper. Place it in an envelope and pray over it, asking God to carry what you cannot. Then physically set that envelope aside—symbolizing that you're leaving it with Him.

Prayer:

Lord, You forgave me fully, even when I didn't deserve it. Help me to hand over the baggage of bitterness and unforgiveness. Free me from the weight of resentment, and heal my heart with Your love. Teach me to release others as You have released me, so I can walk lighter, freer, and closer to You. In Jesus Name We Pray AMEN!