



MON 9/20

- ✓ **SCRIPTURE** Psalm 103:12
- ✓ **THOUGHT** God keeps no record of wrongs! "As far as east is from west —that's how far God has removed our sin from us." [CEB] Reflect on how it feels to be completely forgiven with no record left of your mistakes.
- ✓ **PRAYER** Gracious God, sometimes I forget that you do not keep track of all my sins. Help me enjoy peace of mind knowing that you have let go of my offenses. Amen

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TUES 9/21

- ✓ **SCRIPTURE** Ephesians 4:31-32
- ✓ **THOUGHT** We are forgiven so we must forgive. "Put aside all bitterness, losing your temper, anger, shouting, and slander, along with every other evil. Be kind, compassionate, and forgiving to each other, in the same way God forgave you in Christ." [CEB] Bring to mind someone with whom you find it difficult to live at peace. Ask God to help you today as you seek to be kind and compassionate to that person.
- ✓ **PRAYER** Gracious God, I really struggle sometimes to live at peace with people who frustrate me. Grow patience, kindness, and compassion in my heart so I can treat them with the same love that you have extended to me. Amen.

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WED 9/22

- ✓ **SCRIPTURE** Romans 5:8
- ✓ **THOUGHT** God showed us grace while we were still sinners! "But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." [NIV] Expecting others to have their act together before we will offer them grace is unrealistic. Jesus offered his life while being mocked. He showed mercy to people with no apology or remorse from them. How should this influence our responses to people who wrong us?
- ✓ **PRAYER** Loving God, I am in awe of the way Jesus loved others. I want to be more like Christ and I ask for your Spirit to guide me today. Amen.

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THURS 9/23

- ✓ SCRIPTURE Matthew 26:28
- ✓ THOUGHT Forgiveness matters to Jesus. "For this is my blood, which confirms the covenant between God and his people. It is poured out as a sacrifice to forgive the sins of many." [NLT] At the Last Supper, Jesus expressed the importance of forgiveness by explaining that he would give his own life for it. Let's not ever take it for granted!
- ✓ PRAYER God of grace, help me consider forgiveness to be a precious gift to be both given and received. I am grateful that I can live as your child no matter my shortcomings. Amen.

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FRI 9/24

- ✓ SCRIPTURE Romans 14:19
- ✓ THOUGHT We need each other. "So let's strive for the things that bring peace and the things that build each other up." [CEB] With so much struggle in the world, we are called to do what we can to help and not to harm. Seeking retribution for wrongdoing is tempting, but does it build up or tear down?
- ✓ PRAYER Lord, I want to be someone who works for peace. It is hard sometimes, but I will look to you today for strength. Amen.

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SAT 9/25

- ✓ SCRIPTURE Colossians 3:13-14
- ✓ THOUGHT Unity among us depends on love. "Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony." [NLT] We all have challenging relationships in our lives. List some practical things you can do to work toward unity in a difficult relationship.
- ✓ PRAYER God, life is messy, and relationships can be so difficult. Help me be a peacemaker with my words and actions, always remembering to make allowances for the faults of the people around me. Amen.

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GROUP GUIDE – FORGIVENESS

- ✓ **PRAYER** **God, we acknowledge that you are already here. May our hearts be open to your presence and direction. Amen.**

- ✓ **BIG IDEA** **We have been forgiven! As we recognize and show gratitude for that forgiveness, we, in turn, should forgive others freely. Holding grudges weighs us down and distracts us from loving others.**

- ✓ **READ** **Matthew 18:21-35**

- ✓ **DISCUSS**
 - Jesus told the story of the unforgiving servant in response to Peter's question about how many times he should forgive someone. Jesus responds with a large number, implying that there isn't a limit to forgiveness. How does that make you feel? Share your thoughts on why this can be difficult to accept. Discuss how establishing healthy boundaries differs from offering forgiveness.
 - Jesus chose to tell a story about a servant with an impossible debt to repay. Why do you think he used an example with a debt that was so large? Why do you think he compared this large debt to the relatively tiny debt?
 - When you think of how God has forgiven you, do you consider it to be more like the impossible debt or more like the small debt. Why? Do you think that your view of your own amount of wrongdoing changes your response toward people who wrong you?
 - The servant who was forgiven of so much went to extremes to get his money back from his fellow servant, choking and imprisoning him. His desire for vengeance turned the other servants against him. Have you witnessed a situation where the aftermath of vengeance ended up being worse than the original offense?
 - Letting go of our grudges opens up space in our minds and hearts for love. Have you experienced a time when you were preoccupied with holding on to an offense? Did it impact how you treated the people closest to you?
 - Have you ever been close to someone who could not let go of a grudge? How did it impact them over time?

- ✓ **Pray** **Loving God, we thank you for the unconditional love that you offer us. We know you want each of us to experience that love. We sometimes struggle to offer grace to people who have disappointed us, so we ask that you would help us forgive as you have forgiven us. Amen.**