

ROSE BOOK OF BIBLE CHARTS

VOLUME 3

SPIRITUAL GIFTS ♦ WHO I AM IN CHRIST ♦ ATTRIBUTES OF GOD ♦ ONE-YEAR BIBLE READING PLAN
♦ LIFE OF MOSES ♦ LIFE OF DAVID ♦ ESTHER ♦ RUTH ♦ PSALMS ♦ BOOK OF ACTS ♦ AND MORE



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ROSE
PUBLISHING

ROSE BOOK OF
BIBLE CHARTS
VOLUME 3

**ROSE**
PUBLISHING

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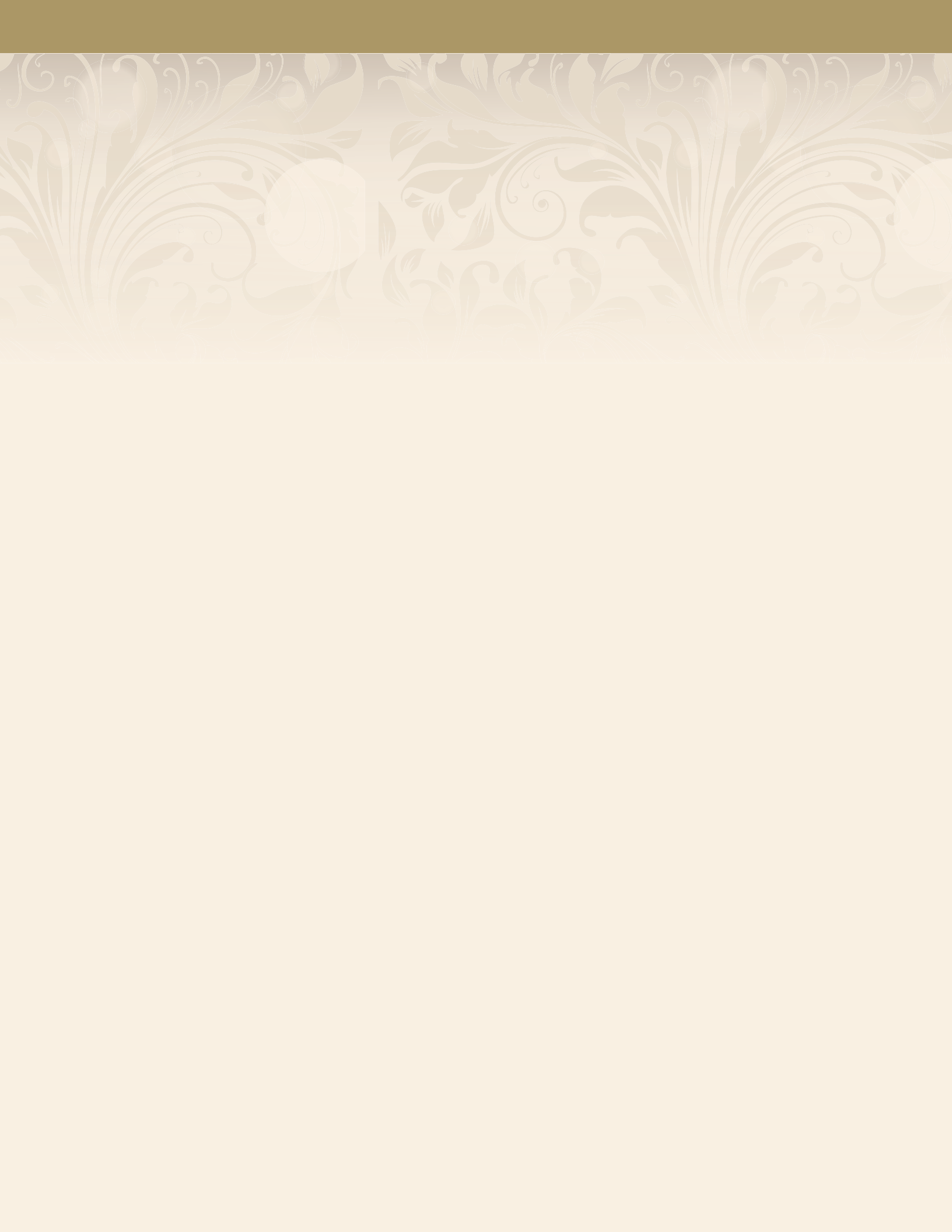
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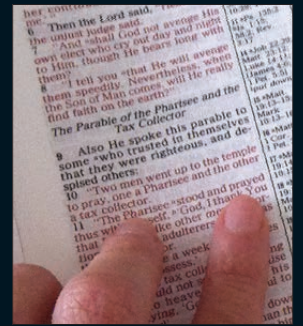
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CHRISTIAN LIVING



who i am in CHRIST

because of what he has done

Because Jesus died, he can offer forgiveness. Because Jesus rose from the dead, he can give us life and victory. Forgiveness, life, and victory give us identity. We now live forgiven, abundant and victorious lives. Our lives are not perfect since we still experience pain and suffering. However, our hope is firm because it is based on Jesus' victory over death.

I am forgiven.

Eph. 1:6–8; Rom. 8:1, 38

All my sins are forgiven before God.
God will not condemn me for:

- *Bad things I have done.*
- *Good things I have left undone.*
- *Evil things I have said.*
- *Wrong things I have thought.*

I am reconciled with God.

Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18–19; Col. 1:21–22;
Heb. 10:19–22

- *I have been reunited with God.*
- *The anger that was between us is gone.*
- *Because of Jesus, I now have free access to God.*

I am rescued.

Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:5–6

- *I have been rescued from a life-threatening situation.*
- *Jesus paid the ransom for my life with his own life.*
- *Sin no longer holds my life hostage.*

I am redeemed.

Eph. 1:13–14; Col. 1:14; Titus 2:14;
Heb. 9:12; 1 Peter 1:18

- *I have had my life debt covered, and my future holds an inheritance from God.*
- *My life is no longer a worthless debt to sin.*
- *I now look forward to rich meaning and purpose in God's future plan for me.*

I am free.

John 8:32–36; Rom. 6:22–23; Gal. 4:7; 5:1

- *I have been set free.*
- *I am no longer a slave to sin.*

I am bought with a price and belong to God.

1 Cor. 6:19–20; 7:23

- *I have been paid for by God.*
- *God owns me.*
- *I no longer belong to myself.*
- *My old way of life no longer owns me.*

I am known by God.

Rom. 8:29; 2 Tim. 2:19

- *I have been known and cared about all along.*
- *God has been watching out for me from the beginning.*
- *God has cared for me from day one.*

I am chosen.

Rom. 8:30; Eph. 1:4; 1 Peter 2:9

- *I have been hand picked by God.*
- *My salvation was not accidental. God intended it for me.*
- *God called me out for salvation, even though I do not deserve it.*

I am justified before God.

Rom. 3:23–26, 5:1, 8:1, 30

- *God has declared me innocent because of Christ.*
- *Jesus has won my case by paying my penalty for me.*
- *I have been acquitted of all my crimes.*

I am accepted.

Rom. 15:7; Eph. 1:4–6; 1 Peter 2:10

- *I have been welcomed by God.*
- *I am no longer rejected.*
- *I am no longer an outsider.*

I am saved.

Rom. 5:8–10; 7:13–25; Eph. 2:1–10;
Col. 1:13

I have been rescued:

- *From God's just anger.*
- *From sin.*
- *From myself.*
- *From death.*
- *From Satan and a sinful system.*

I am alive.

Rom. 6:11; 8:9–11; Eph. 2:4–5

- *I have received new life from God.*
- *My spirit has been brought to life and will never be dead again.*
- *My body will be made new after I die and I will live forever.*
- *I have new meaning and purpose and a new way of looking at life.*

I am loved.

Rom. 5:5; 8:39; 1 John 3:16; 4:19

- *God deeply loves me.*
- *I know this because he has given me his most precious gift—his Son, Jesus.*
- *I know that I am loved because God's Spirit of love is in my heart.*

I am taken care of.

John 6:37; Phil. 1:6; 4:19

- *I am secure in God's hands.*
- *I will not be abandoned; God will complete his work in me.*
- *God will supply all that I need.*



I am a creature.

Gen. 2:7

God made me.

- Like a potter, God crafted me.
- God made me with skill and intention.
- I am complex and complicated.
- I have God's life-breath in me.

I am like God.

Gen. 1:26–27

God made me more than just an animal.

- I am made in God's image.
- I am made to relate to God and others in love.

But how did we arrive here? Let's trace the story from the beginning...

who God created me to be

God created all things, visible and invisible. Because he is the creator, he is also the rightful owner of all things. In addition to being the rightful owner, God also rules over all of creation; his authority is final.

I am known.

Psalm 139; Jer. 1:5

God made me and knew me before I was born.

- God made me.
- God knew me while I was still in the womb.
- God knows me better than I know myself.

I am made to be God's caretaker of his creation.

Gen. 1:26–31; 2:15–17

God made me for caring responsibility.

- I am made to help God in his ruling of creation.
- I am made to care for his earth.

I am made to relate to his creation.

Gen. 2:19–24

God made me to relate to his entire creation.

- I am made to love humans just as God loves me.
- I am made to love and enjoy God's creatures and nature.

I am made for thankful, obedient worship to God.

Gen. 1:28–30; 2:16–17

God made me to glorify and enjoy him forever.

- I am made to praise God by doing what he intended for me.
- I am made to enjoy myself as I enjoy God.

image of God

In Genesis 1:27, the Bible says, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." What is the image of God? The Bible says that Jesus is the perfect image of God (see Col. 2:9 and Heb. 1:3). However, Christians have understood this concept in three different though complementary ways:

1. The qualities and attributes that distinguish humanity from the animals. Some of these qualities are: reason, will, personality, etc.
2. The ability to be in a relationship with God. This relationship constitutes the image of God in us.
3. The caring of God's creation is what demonstrates God's image in human beings.

It is possible that all three things are involved in what the image of God is. Humans are the image of God because they are able to relate to God, to each other, and to God's creation. In addition, humans represent God in this creation. When humans are reconciled with God, the abundant life that results allows the image of God to come through more clearly.



who i am on my own — when i ignored **God** and went my own way. Although God made us to be his representatives in creation, humans rebelled and sinned against God. Because of sin, humanity is unable to relate to God, one another, and creation. Death, pain, and suffering entered the universe. Because of human disobedience, the whole creation was thrown into darkness and chaos. Our very existence was in danger. God's amazing grace and endless mercy allowed us to live. However, we live limited and twisted lives. This is also part of humanity's identity.

I was broken.

Rom. 3:10–18

Because of Jesus, I am...

Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20

- *I am crucified with Christ.*
- *Jesus' body was broken for me.*

I was living my life for myself.

Eph. 2:3

Because of Jesus, I am...

Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12

- *I am buried with Christ to my old life.*
- *Jesus' burial buried my old selfish life.*

I was a sinner.

Rom. 3:23

Because of Jesus, I am...

Rom. 6:8; 1 Peter 2:24

- *I am dead with Christ to sin.*
- *Jesus' death was the death of my sin.*

I was a user and abuser of God's creation.

Rom. 1:21–25; 3:13–18; Eph. 2:2

Because of Jesus, I am...

Rom. 6:4; Col. 3:1

- *I am raised with Christ to a new life.*
- *Jesus' resurrection raised me to a new relationship with God and his world.*

I was not living by God's instructions.

Rom. 1:21–2:1

Because of Jesus, I am...

Rom. 13:8–10

- *I am fulfilling God's law in Christ.*
- *Jesus' love for me makes me want to live his law of love.*



God is the solution. He chose for himself a people, those who would carry his name and be an example to all people. He gave us his word, in which he described his will for humanity and his creation. However, the ultimate solution is Jesus himself. Because he is both human and God, Jesus came to do what no other human could. His life, death, and resurrection created the bridge that allows us to be reconciled with God once again.

The cross is the climax of the biblical story. In the cross, all paths converge; all stories are given the possibility of a new direction. In the cross, God brings restoration, hope, and a new life for a creation groaning for redemption.

I was someone who worshiped my own way.

Rom. 1:25

Because of Jesus, I am...

Eph. 1:12–14

- *I am glorifying God in Christ.*
- *Jesus' glorious victory makes me want to give all glory to God.*

I was a mess.

Rom. 7

Because of Jesus, I am...

Phil. 1:6; Col. 2:9–10; Heb. 10:14

- *I am complete in Christ.*
- *Jesus' perfect work has made my life complete. One day, when Jesus returns, he will make it perfect.*

I was dead.

Eph. 2:1

Because of Jesus, I am...

Col. 2:13

- *I am alive with Christ.*
- *Jesus' new life flows through me now.*

I am...

We live in a culture of extremes. On the one hand, the culture around us emphasizes self-sufficiency and independence over the healthy emotional development of children. On the other, it attempts to bolster children's emotional health and self-worth by constant praise and a sense of entitlement. Both extremes have damaged children who grow up with a broken sense of self and lack of acceptance and love.

A realistic understanding of who we are gives us the chance for a healthy self-regard. The Bible gives us a correct understanding of who we are: people deeply flawed and sinful, deeply loved and redeemed by God, and equipped and empowered by the Holy Spirit to be and do as Christ would.

The Apostle Paul

The Apostle Paul is one of the great champions of the faith and worthy of imitation (1 Cor. 4:16). Paul candidly spoke about his past: a past full of pride and violence. He strongly contrasted the person he was, what he valued and what gave him meaning, with the person he became after his encounter with the risen Christ. His value, his goal and meaning for life were linked to Christ.

Paul before and after

Gal. 1:13–14; Phil. 3:4–6

before, I was...

- born a Jew
- a Roman citizen
- circumcised on the eighth day
- of the tribe of Benjamin
- a Pharisee
- persecutor of the church
- zealous for the tradition of my ancestors

now, I am...

- an apostle of Christ
- an apostle to the Gentiles
- a new person, all of my ancestry and ethnic background is worthless compared to the value of Christ
- a prisoner of Jesus
- a slave to everyone

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

—Gal. 2:20

who i am and who i will be in CHRiST

The story of the Bible does not end on the cross. In fact, the cross opened new possibilities. The goal of the biblical story is not just the salvation of humanity through the gracious work of Jesus on the cross. God desires to redeem and restore all of his creation. The conclusion of this magnificent story is the creation of new heavens and new earth. All things will be made new! In that new creation, God will make things the way they should be.

I am a new creature.

2 Cor. 5:1–5, 16–19; Phil. 3:20–21

- I have had a total makeover of my mind and spirit and my new body is on order.
- My inner self has been recreated after a new model of human being—Jesus.
- My body will be made new after the pattern of Jesus' resurrected body.

I am born of God.

John 1:12–13; Rom. 8:29; 1 John 4:7

- I have been born into God's family.
- I am now a child of God after the likeness of Jesus.
- Jesus is the "firstborn" example from the dead of what I shall be in the resurrection.

I am adopted of God.

Rom. 8:15; Eph. 1:5; Heb. 2:10–12

- God has selected me to be his child.
- I am no longer an orphan.
- Jesus is my older brother.
- Because of him, I now share in the glory of being God's child.

I am a child of the promise.

Rom. 9:8; Gal. 4:23

- I am a child of Abraham, a promised child.
- I am a spiritual descendant of the father of faith.
- I am called to carry on this spiritual heritage in the world.

I am Jesus' friend.

John 15:15

- Jesus considers me his friend.
- I am a servant of Jesus Christ, yet he calls me friend.

I am a citizen of heaven.

Eph. 2:19; Phil. 3:20

- I belong with all those through history who have loved God.
- I am a member of God's heavenly kingdom.
- My true identity is with the people of God.



I am blessed with every spiritual blessing.

Eph. 1:3; 2:7

- I have all that can be had of God's treasures.
- I have been given unfathomable riches in Christ.
- It will take the rest of eternity to unfold all these blessings.

I am God's workmanship.

Eph. 2:10

- I am a work of art.
- I have been made by the most creative Artist ever.
- I am a poem of God's love.

I am a temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; 2 Cor. 6:16

- I have God living in me.
- I am God's house.
- I have been made holy for God to live in me.

I am a member of Christ's body.

Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:27

- I am connected in a living way to Jesus.
- I am a part of a living organism bigger than myself.
- I have a purpose and function in that body.

I am sealed.

2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30

- I have God's royal seal upon me.
- I have God's seal of ownership.
- I have God's guarantee of a quality product in me.

I am made pure.

1 John 1:9; 3:3

- I am made clean.
- Christ's life and death purify me.
- I am being made holy for God by his Spirit working in me.

I am secure.

Rom. 8:28, 31–38

- I know that God works things for my good in all circumstances.
- I am free from all condemnation.
- I know that nothing can separate me from the love of God.

I am safe.

2 Cor. 1:21–22

I am safe because God has

- Anointed me.
- Set his seal of ownership on me.
- Put his Spirit in my heart as a guarantee.

I am victorious.

Rom. 8:37; 1 Cor. 15:57

- I cannot be beaten.
- I cannot be stopped by death, thanks to Christ.
- I shall be a winner in the end because God is for me.

I am going to live forever.

John 5:24; 6:47; 11:25–26; 17:3

- I will live on with God.
- My spirit shall not die but go to be with God.
- Even if my body dies, I will live again and get a new body in the resurrection.

I am in God's planned will as an heir of all creation.

Rom. 8:17, 32; Eph. 1:9–11

- I am going to inherit the universe with Christ.
- I know this because God has given all authority and power to Jesus and I belong to him.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.
—Col. 3:15

the three R's— Reconciled, Ransomed, and Redeemed

Reconciled—to be reconciled means to be united again or to become friends again. Human sin and rebellion caused hostility between God and humanity. However, Jesus united us again in friendship with God by his death on the cross.

Ransomed—a ransom is a price that is paid for release; to be ransomed is to be freed at a cost. The Bible tells us that humanity was held hostage to sin, death and the Devil. Jesus' death was the ransom paid to free us from that slavery and reconcile us to God.

Redeemed—to redeem means to buy back again. Jesus' death paid the voucher, canceling the debt we owed.

a new mind

At the center of the good news about Christ is the transformation of individual lives. Paul tells us in Rom. 12:1–2 that this transformation involves the renewing of our minds. He goes on to say in Phil. 2:5–8 that this renewal

is about having a new mind-set or attitude that Christ himself had. In other words, we are to identify with and take for ourselves Jesus' whole way of thinking and living.



who are we?

The Bible describes our encounter with God as a new birth (John 3:3). The apostle Paul extends this idea when he writes that we mature as Christians, and that we must, eventually, give up milk for

solid food (Heb. 5:11–14). Just as children need to find their identities, we as spiritual children need to find our Christian identities as well.

Our identities begin with the recognition that we no longer belong to ourselves but to God. That is, we need to recognize that if Christ bought us at a high price, then we belong to him.

In the Scriptures, we learn who we are, where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. When we read the stories of the Patriarchs in Genesis, we learn how God relates to us, imperfect people who long for him. When we read the Psalms, we learn a vocabulary of praise and petition. This vocabulary gives us words to praise God, to express our grief, and make our requests.

In the prophets, we learn what it means to be God's people in moments of difficulties and challenges, what it means to fail and receive God's grace and forgiveness. In the stories of the apostolic church, we see how the Holy Spirit guides and trains his church to carry on God's mission.

When we make ours the story of God's people, as told in the Bible and in the history of the church, our identity merges with that of God's people. In this process, we grow from infant believers to people mature in the faith. As we

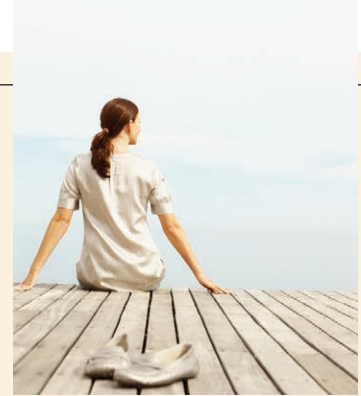
appropriate God's story with his people, we learn to teach others how to become part of this great story of salvation.



our identity—who we are, who I am—depends on the identity of God's people:

- I am a member of Christ's body;
- I am part of God's people;
- I am a child of God called to love him and his creation;
- I am a follower of Jesus because in him I am fully alive and willing to serve.

We are able to make this beautiful story ours only through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. Through the Holy Spirit, we are renewed into the image of Jesus. By following his steps, we walk on the path of many believers before us, God's people, and we clear the path for those believers who are yet to come.



meaning of the word “Christian”

In Acts 11:25–26, Luke tells us that believers in Jesus were first called “Christians” at Antioch. The name obviously stuck, but what does it mean? *Christ* is the Greek term for the Hebrew *Messiah*, which means “anointed person.” To be anointed in the Hebrew culture was to be set apart for some special service. It came to be associated in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament with God's promised savior of the line of king David—Jesus. The “ian” ending indicates belonging or membership. Christian means “one who belongs to Christ,” or “one who is a part of Christ.” Therefore, if a Christian is one who is connected to Christ, should it not be apparent in the way we act?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT *Forgiveness*

Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.—Luke 11:4a

With these familiar words in the Lord's Prayer, we are reminded that forgiveness should characterize our lives. But these few words, one might object, are a lot easier said than done. Forgiveness is one of the hardest things to do because the sins that need forgiving can be so damaging. They have wounded us so deeply that the mere idea of offering forgiveness to those who hurt us seems impossible. Forgiveness, in these cases, appears like letting people off the hook for their transgressions. The sharp pain in our hearts creates a barrier that prevents us from moving beyond our pain. Our pain and brokenness seem unending.

In the face of so much brokenness in ourselves and in our world, how should we respond? Should we deny it? Ignore it? Get even? Give up? God's Word says to forgive it. Forgiveness will never be easy. However, only through forgiveness can healing begin.

Most of us can relate to many kinds of brokenness. Below are a few examples of situations in which forgiveness might be very difficult.

AREAS	SOURCES OF BROKENNESS
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Abandonment by a father or mother ♦ Infidelity, divorce, lying ♦ Betrayal by a trusted friend or confidant
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Sexual or domestic abuse ♦ Parental neglect of a child's physical needs ♦ Assault or violence
Spiritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Misuse of authority by a church leader ♦ Rejection or poor treatment by a church "family" ♦ Major sins committed by a pastor ♦ Private sins that damage a person's relationship with God
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Stealing, embezzlement, fraud ♦ Failure to repay a debt or loan ♦ Unfair loss of a job or employment discrimination
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Name calling, insults, public humiliation ♦ Loss of reputation from gossip and lies ♦ Discrimination from prejudices, racism, or sexism ♦ Bullying, cyber-bullying

"Forgiveness is God's invention for coming to terms with a world in which, despite their best intentions, people are unfair to each other and hurt each other deeply. He began by forgiving us. And he invites us all to forgive each other."

—Lewis B. Smedes

Forgiveness Is Needed

Forgiveness exists because sin exists. Forgiveness is necessary because sin powerfully affects all areas of our lives. Forgiveness is not about ignoring evil, excusing it, or making light of it. On the contrary, forgiveness courageously faces sin and evil. Forgiveness acknowledges that a terrible wrong has been done and seeks to do something about it.

SIN IS REAL

No one needs to look far to see that there is sin in the world. We are born into a world where harmful patterns of sin persist in societies, communities, churches, and families. We may not even be aware of our own contribution to the cycles of sin. Because sin is in the world and in us, we need forgiveness even more.

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.—1 John 1:8–10

SIN IS DESTRUCTIVE

Sin breaks our communion with God and destroys our relationships with others. The first human sin brought death into the world for all to suffer the consequences. When someone hurts us, our pain and our sin begin a cycle of anger, violence, resentment, and revenge that increases over time. Only forgiveness can allow us to break this cycle.

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.—Romans 5:12

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.—Colossians 1:21

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet, but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight.—James 4:1–2a

GOD TAKES SIN SERIOUSLY

Scripture tells us that God is merciful and forgiving, but it also makes clear that God does not tolerate sin. Because sin is so harmful, it demands divine judgment, not mere dismissal.

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."—Exodus 34:6–7

Forgiveness Is Possible

If judgment of sin were the last word on the matter, we would all stay trapped in our guilt and brokenness. If vengeance for every offense were the only option, we would forever remain separated from our Creator. But thank God he has provided another way—the way of forgiveness. Forgiveness does not erase the past, but it gives us a chance for a better future.

GOD DESIRES TO FORGIVE

The Old Testament contains many examples of God sending punishment for sinful acts. However, his withholding of judgment was for the purpose of bringing the people back to God so he could forgive them and restore the broken relationship. Though our actions deserve judgment, God desires to be merciful.

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.—2 Chronicles 7:14

Perhaps when the people of Judah hear about every disaster I plan to inflict on them, they will turn from their wicked ways; then I will forgive their wickedness and their sin.—Jeremiah 36:3

The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.—Psalm 103:8–12

JESUS MADE FORGIVENESS POSSIBLE

In the New Testament, we see God's desire to forgive expressed most clearly in the life and death of his Son. Jesus' sinless life and voluntary death atoned for the world's sins. He bore the ultimate judgment of sin so we don't have to. God forgives us because he loves us.



Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you.—Acts 13:38

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.—Romans 5:8

*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace.
—Ephesians 1:7*

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. —Colossians 1:13–14

Forgiveness Is Available

When we place our faith in Jesus, we are declared free from divine condemnation and we stand forgiven of our sin. Forgiveness, not judgment, is the final word.

“Forgiving love is a possibility only for those who know that they are not good, who feel themselves in need of divine mercy... [who] feel themselves as well as their fellow men convicted of sin by a holy God and know that the differences between the good man and the bad man are insignificant in his sight.”

—Reinhold Niebuhr

I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and remembers your sins no more.—Isaiah 43:25

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life has set you free from the law of sin and death.—Romans 8:1–2

*Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
—Acts 2:38*

All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.—Acts 10:43

Forgiveness Is Ongoing

Forgiveness is not a one-time thing. We need to continue to ask God for forgiveness for the wrongs we commit even after our initial acceptance of Jesus. In response to such generous forgiveness, God entrusts us with the responsibility and privilege to mirror his love by forgiving those who sin against us.

ASK FOR FORGIVENESS AS OFTEN AS NEEDED

As believers, we are made right with God through Jesus, yet old patterns of sin may still resurface. Sinful habits in our lives hurt others and impede a growing, vibrant relationship with God. We continue to be in need of God's forgiveness daily, and are instructed to ask forgiveness from anyone whom we have wronged.

My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.—1 John 2:1–2

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.—James 5:16a



“God's forgiveness is unconditional; it comes from a heart that does not demand anything for itself, a heart that is completely empty of self-seeking. It is this divine forgiveness that I have to practice in my daily life. It calls me to keep stepping over all my arguments that say forgiveness is unwise, unhealthy, and impractical. It challenges me to step over all my needs for gratitude and compliments. Finally, it demands of me that I step over that wounded part of my heart that feels hurt and wronged and that wants to stay in control and put a few conditions between me and the one whom I am asked to forgive.”

—Henri Nouwen

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.
 —Matthew 5:23–24

FORGIVE OTHERS AS OFTEN AS NEEDED

God forgives us time and time again, and he calls us to do the same. There is no limit to how often or how many times we are to forgive others. God wants his forgiven people to be forgivers.

If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them, and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day, and seven times come back to you saying “I repent,” you must forgive them.—Luke 17:3–4

Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.—Colossians 3:13–14

Ten Stories of Forgiveness

THE STORY	REFERENCE	KEY VERSE
Esau forgave his brother Jacob after years of estrangement.	Genesis 25:19–34; 27:1–28:9; 32:1–21; 33	But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept (33:4).
Joseph forgave his brothers who betrayed him.	Genesis 37–50	You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives (50:20).
David asked for God’s forgiveness for his adultery with Bathsheba.	2 Samuel 11:1–12:25; Psalm 51	Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me (Ps. 51:2–3).
Out of love, a forgiven woman anointed Jesus’ feet.	Luke 7:36–50	Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little (v. 47).
The Parable of the Prodigal Son	Luke 15:11–32	But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him (v. 20).
A tax collector begged for mercy while a Pharisee failed to see his own need for forgiveness.	Luke 18:9–14	But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, “God, have mercy on me, a sinner” (v. 13).
Jesus did not condemn a woman caught in adultery.	John 8:1–11	“Then neither do I condemn you,” Jesus declared. “Go now and leave your life of sin” (v. 11b).
Jesus asked the Father to forgive those who crucified him.	Luke 23:32–43	Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing (v. 34).
Jesus restored Peter who had denied him three times.	John 13:31–38; 18:15–27; 21:15–19	Jesus asked [Peter] the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep” (21:17).
Stephen asked God to forgive those who were stoning him.	Acts 7:54–60	Then he fell on his knees and cried out, “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” When he had said this, he fell asleep (v. 60).

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant Matthew 18:21–35

Peter's Question: “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” (v. 21). Peter probably thought his “seven times” suggestion was generous since the rabbis of the day taught that one should forgive only up to three times.

Jesus' Answer: “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven” (v. 22 NASB). If Peter is fishing for a cap on forgiveness, Jesus gives him an impossible limit, which is really no limit at all. Jesus explains why we should forgive with this story about a king and a servant who owes him a lot of money.

The Merciful King	The Unmerciful Servant
Is owed a massive debt of 10,000 bags of gold (v. 24). (This is a way of saying it is an incalculable sum, like saying “billions of dollars.”)	Is owed a small debt (v. 28). (The debt the servant owes the king is about 600,000 times more than what the servant is owed by a fellow servant.)
Is moved to compassion by the servant's plea in which the servant promises to pay a debt which is clearly impossible for him to do (v. 26).	Becomes violent and chokes the servant who owes him, and refuses to listen when the servant pleads for mercy (v. 29).
Cancels the entire debt and lets the servant walk away a debt-free man instead of being sold into slavery as the law allowed (v. 27).	Throws his fellow servant into a debtor's prison (v. 30).

When the unmerciful servant's actions are exposed:

- ♦ The fellow servants are outraged and report his conduct to the king (v. 31).
- ♦ This time the king is moved to anger, not compassion (v. 34).
- ♦ The servant is called “wicked” by the king (v. 32).
- ♦ The king renews the debt and hands the servant over to jailers (v. 34).

The Lesson: “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart” (v. 35). Our debt to God is enormous, and his forgiveness is extravagant. In light of this, Jesus allows no excuse for withholding forgiveness from others.

Why Forgive?

FORGIVENESS FREES THE FORGIVER

Anyone who has been wronged knows that forgiveness is not easy. However, resentment and bitterness are damaging. If anger is allowed to fester it will spill over into other areas of life, destroying relationships and leading to a path of revenge.

Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.—Hebrews 12:14–15

Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.—1 Peter 3:8–9

FORGIVE SO THAT YOU WILL BE FORGIVEN

If we want to be forgiven ourselves, we must extend that same forgiveness to others, allowing forgiveness to triumph over the desire to extract retribution.

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.—Matthew 6:14–15

“Resentment is like a glass of poison that a man drinks; then he sits down and waits for his enemy to die.”
—Author Unknown

“Forgiveness is unlocking the door to set someone free and realizing you were the prisoner!” —Author Unknown



And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.—Mark 11:25

Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.—Luke 6:37

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.—James 2:12–13

HEALING RELATIONSHIPS REQUIRES FORGIVENESS

Often the key to healing relationships begins with forgiveness. God is working in the world to reconcile fallen humans to himself through Christ, and he calls us to be ministers of reconciliation in this broken world.

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ’s behalf: Be reconciled to God.—2 Corinthians 5:18–20 (See also Romans 5:6–11)

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel.—Colossians 1:21–23a

If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent—not to put it too severely. The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him.—2 Corinthians 2:5–8

“Without forgiveness, there’s no future.”

—Desmond Tutu, Anglican Archbishop who opposed apartheid (racial segregation) in South Africa

FORGIVENESS IS A TESTIMONY OF GOD’S LOVE

The world tells us to “get even” or “make them sorry!” God says something quite different. God’s love for all people motivates us to love others as well—even the most unlovable! When we forgive, we demonstrate God’s love for a sinful world.

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.—Matthew 5:44–48

“We forgive with no strings attached; that may require us to forgive repeatedly. When we do, we shock the world with God’s power at work within us.”

—Rebecca Nichols Alonzo, who, at age seven, witnessed her mother’s murder

DOES FORGIVENESS MEAN RECONCILIATION?

A common reason people withhold forgiveness is that they think that forgiveness requires immediate and total reconciliation with the offender. People who have been hurt ask: If I forgive, does that mean I have to put myself back in the abusive situation? Must I force myself to be best friends again with the person who wronged me? Am I required to give the betrayer my full trust?

No, forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. Forgiveness involves letting go of vengeance and hatred for being wronged. Reconciliation can be described as “restoration to harmony in relationship.” One person can forgive, but it takes two people to restore a broken relationship. Forgiveness alone neither guarantees nor demands reconciliation. Often much more is needed before reconciliation can (or should) take place, for example: repentance, restitution of the wrong, gaining back trust, or evidence of genuine change. If forgiveness is taken to mean “going back” to the offender as if nothing ever happened, then people will end up only with a cheap imitation of reconciliation, far unlike the genuine harmony in a restored relationship described in Scripture (1 Thess. 5:11; Rom. 12:10).

DEALING WITH ANGER

Sometimes anger and bitterness prevent us from experiencing the freedom of forgiveness. The following steps can help us break free from the chains of anger.

1. Acknowledge God's complete forgiveness by grace (Col. 1:13–14).
I am forgiven by the grace of God!
2. Be willing to confess your bitterness and resentment to God (Ps. 51:10–12).
God, forgive my bitter attitudes and my anger toward _____.
3. Recognize that your anger is a violation of God's Word (Matt. 6:14–15) and choose to release the anger (Heb. 12:14–15).
With the Holy Spirit's help, I choose to lay down this anger. I release my desire for revenge on _____.
4. Follow the Holy Spirit's leading as to whether you need to speak to the person you need to forgive (James 2:12–13).
God, I ask for your Spirit to guide me into what I should do next.

Go through these steps repeatedly until words become experience.

How to Forgive

PRACTICE FORGIVENESS BEFORE IT'S NEEDED

A runner who finishes a marathon has gotten into the habit of running long before the start of the race. In the same way, if we want to be able to forgive the big stuff, we have to get into the habit of forgiving the small stuff. Forgiveness, like other virtues, takes daily cultivation.

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

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. —1 Peter 4:8

EXAMINE YOUR OWN SIN

Recognizing our own need for God's forgiveness enables us to see our offender's need for mercy. The practice of the Lord's Supper (Communion) reminds us that we are all flawed and sinful people in need of forgiveness. Self-righteousness will breed an unforgiving heart, but through humility we can learn to extend mercy to others.

He who conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.—Proverbs 28:13

But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults.—Psalm 19:12

Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins."—Matthew 26:27–28

GIVE UP YOUR RIGHT TO REVENGE

Anger is a natural response when we are harmed. But God's Word says to be careful that our anger does not result in taking revenge. We should not add sin upon sin, but leave the situation where it belongs—in God's hands. (See also 1 Thess. 5:15)

Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this wrong!" Wait for the LORD, and he will avenge you.—Proverbs 20:22

In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.—Ephesians 4:26–27

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.... Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.—Romans 12:14–21

"That is the whole lesson: the sins of others you see, but your own sin you fail to see. In repentance, recognize God's mercy toward you; in this way alone will you be able to forgive."

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer, German pastor and theologian who was imprisoned and executed for his opposition to Nazism

LOVING YOUR ENEMIES

Loving your “enemies” is to see them as fellow human beings who are loved by God and in need of his grace; but it is not to tolerate their abuse or invite them to hurt you again. The so-called “love” that ignores or allows such damaging sins is not really love at all.

LEARN FROM VETERAN FORGIVERS

There is no cookie-cutter way to forgive. Every situation is different. For instance, how to go about forgiving a close friend who has betrayed you will be different from how to forgive an unknown hit-and-run driver. We can gain wisdom in knowing how to deal with particular situations by taking note of Christians who have already walked the path of forgiveness. Their examples and guidance can give us a long-term view beyond the initial feelings of anger and pain.

Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do.—Philippians 3:17

Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job’s perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.—James 5:10–11

LET FORGIVENESS TAKE TIME

The apostle Paul compares the Christian life to a race that we have not yet finished. This side of heaven we may not be able to forgive to the extent that we want to because we are still imperfect people in an imperfect world. What we are called to do is to continue moving forward and not to give up.

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. Only let us live up to what we have already attained.—Philippians 3:12–16

PRAY FOR YOUR ENEMIES

It might sound cliché to say “just pray about it,” but there is nothing trite about praying for someone who has wronged you. Such prayers can have a powerful effect on the person praying. By the power of God’s Spirit in us, through prayer, God can miraculously change our hatred into love.

But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.—Matthew 5:44–45a

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans.—Romans 8:26

But [the Lord] said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” ... For when I am weak, then I am strong.—2 Corinthians 12:9–10

TRUST IN GOD’S GOODNESS

Placing a painful situation in God’s hands is only possible if we allow ourselves to trust that God knows best. When we give it over to God, we will be surprised at the good he will bring out of any bad situation. The best example of God’s goodness transcending evil is that of Jesus’ death on the cross. What appeared to many to be the pointless crucifixion of an innocent man turned out to be the means whereby God provided forgiveness of sins for the world. Jesus trusted the Father that the way of forgiveness would be the best path.

To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”—1 Peter 2:21–24

“Forgiveness stretches out over time, but you have to start out with the will to forgive. But the bitterness may reenter your mind from time to time, and then you have to think about forgiveness again.”

—An Amish mother whose daughter was killed when a gunman opened fire in a schoolhouse

“When we are powerless to do a thing, it is a great joy that we can come and step inside the ability of Jesus.”

—Corrie ten Boom, Holocaust survivor

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT MONEY

Money is a big thing in the world's eye, but from God's view it's a small thing. It's what we *do* with this small thing that makes a big, eternal difference. God cares about our faithfulness with what he has entrusted to us—whether it's a lot or a little. Jesus praised the poor widow who gave generously to God out of her meager income (Mark 12:41–44). Her outward act of exceeding faithfulness mirrored an inward spiritual reality of a heart set on the things of God.

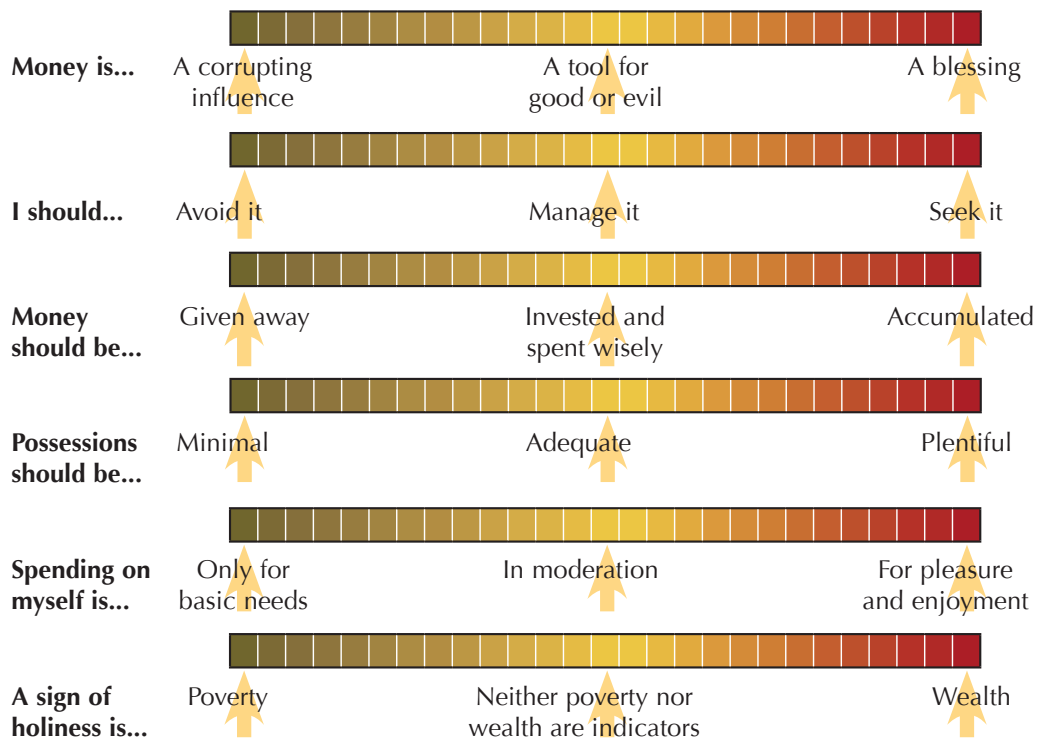
*“Small things are small things,
but faithfulness with a small
thing is a big thing.”*

—Hudson Taylor, Missionary to China

Jesus tells us to invest in the kingdom of God so that we will find genuine treasures far better than the fleeting, insignificant riches of this world (Matthew 6:19–21). As we remain faithful to God in our use of money, he will prove faithful to care for us through all life's financial ups and downs. Jesus reassures us with these words: “Seek first [God's] kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).

ATTITUDES TOWARD MONEY

People may have different attitudes toward money based on personal experience or how they were raised. But whatever one's feelings are about money and possessions, they need to be evaluated in light of what the Bible says. Looking at the diagram below, how do you view money in your life?



FOR THE GLORY OF GOD

First Corinthians 10:31 says, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” The use of money can be for the glory of God.

God Is the True Owner of Our Money.

In order to use money in ways that glorify God, it's important to first understand whose money it really is. God is the Creator and Owner of all things—including all money, property, and investments.

The earth is the LORD's and everything in it. —PSALM 24:1



Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. —1 CHRONICLES 29:11

“The silver is mine and the gold is mine,” declares the LORD Almighty. —HAGGAI 2:8

Faithfulness Will Be Rewarded.

God is the Owner, but we are his managers whom he has entrusted with the things of this world. We are accountable to the true Owner to be faithful in our financial transactions.

His master replied, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!” —MATTHEW 25:23

Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. —PROVERBS 3:9–10

Give generously to [the needy] and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. —DEUTERONOMY 15:10

“The everyday choices I make regarding money will influence the very course of eternity.”
—Randy Alcorn, Christian author



Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else’s property, who will give you property of your own? —LUKE 16:9–12

Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.” —MATTHEW 25:34–36

God’s Agenda Matters More than Ours.

Any money God has entrusted to us has the potential to be used for our selfish ends or for God’s agenda. Evangelist Billy Graham said, “Give me five minutes with a person’s checkbook, and I will tell you where their heart is.” If you want your heart to be set on the things of God, get into the habit of placing your money into things God cares about.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. —MATTHEW 6:19–21

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” —LUKE 19:8–9

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. —LUKE 12:48b

