

## D-LIFE BOOT CAMP

Training for a lifestyle  
of discipleship.



# Keeping it Real

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Pastor Dale L. Crawley Sr.

*"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Matthew 28:19-20*

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## Spiritual Formation: Forgiveness & Letting Go Releasing the Past Without Losing Your Wisdom

### BIG IDEA

Forgiveness releases the weight of the past so your heart can move forward. It does not erase the wound, but it frees you from carrying it forever.

### KEY SCRIPTURE

Luke 23:34 – **'Father, forgive them...'**

Romans 12:19 – **'Do not take revenge... leave room for God's justice.'**

**Forgiveness in the Bible** is a “release” or a “dismissal” of something. The forgiveness we have in Christ involves the release of sinners from God’s just penalty and the complete dismissal of all charges against us (see Romans 8:1). Colossians 1:14 says that in God’s beloved Son “**we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**” The Amplified Bible translates the last phrase like this: “**the forgiveness of our sins [and the cancellation of sins’ penalty].**” God’s gracious forgiveness of our sin is to be the measure of our gracious forgiveness of others (Ephesians 4:32).

To some people, forgiveness may seem like weakness or letting an undeserving person win, but it has no connection to weakness or even to emotions. Instead, forgiveness is an act of the will. Forgiveness is not granted because a person deserves to be forgiven. No one deserves to be forgiven. Forgiveness is a deliberate act of love, mercy, and grace. Forgiveness is a decision **to not** hold something against another person, despite what he or she has done to you.

### WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT

Forgiveness does NOT mean:

- The hurt was acceptable
- Nothing serious happened
- You must trust the person again immediately
- You must allow continued harm

- You must forget the event

## WHAT FORGIVENESS IS

Forgiveness means releasing the right to settle the score.

It is saying: 'What happened mattered, but I refuse to let it control my future.'

## WHAT IS FORGIVENESS OF OTHERS?

Forgiveness is also an essential part of the life of believers. Ephesians

4:32 commands, **“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”** Similarly, Colossians 3:13 says, **“Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”** The key in both passages is that we are to forgive others as God has forgiven us. Why do we forgive? Because we have been forgiven!

The Bible tells us that we are to forgive those who sin against us. We keep no record of wrongs (1 Corinthians 13:5) but forgive as many times as necessary (Matthew 18:21–22). Refusing to forgive a person demonstrates resentment, bitterness, and anger, none of which are the traits of a growing Christian. Biblically, forgiveness is not just something that the offended person offers; it requires the offender to receive it, bringing reconciliation to the relationship.

God promises that, when we come to Him confessing our sin and asking for forgiveness, He freely grants it for the sake of Christ (1 John 1:9). Likewise, the forgiveness we extend to others should know no limits (Luke 17:3–4).

## WHY LETTING GO CAN BE HARD

Resentment often feels protective. It can provide:

- A sense of justice
- Emotional protection
- Moral superiority
- Distance from further hurt

But over time, holding onto resentment keeps the wound alive.

## UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS OF FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is usually a process, not a single moment.

Step 1 – Acknowledge the hurt honestly.

Step 2 – Release the debt you feel is owed.

Step 3 – Entrust justice to God.

Step 4 – Reclaim your peace and emotional freedom.

### **ILLUSTRATION: THE HEAVY ROCK**

Imagine holding a rock in your hand. At first it feels manageable. But the longer you hold it, the heavier it feels and the more your arm begins to ache. The rock has not changed, but the longer you carry it, the more it drains you. Unforgiveness works the same way.

### **PERSONAL REFLECTION**

1. Is there a hurt I may still be holding onto?

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2. What emotion surfaces when I think about that situation?

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3. What would it look like to release the debt I feel is owed?

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### **THIS WEEK'S PRACTICE**

Spend a few minutes each day asking God to help you release the weight of past wounds. Pray honestly about the hurt and ask for the grace to forgive, even if the process takes time.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

*Lord, You see every hurt and every wound we carry. Give us courage to release what we have been holding onto. Teach us to forgive as You have forgiven us, and lead us into freedom and peace. Amen.*