

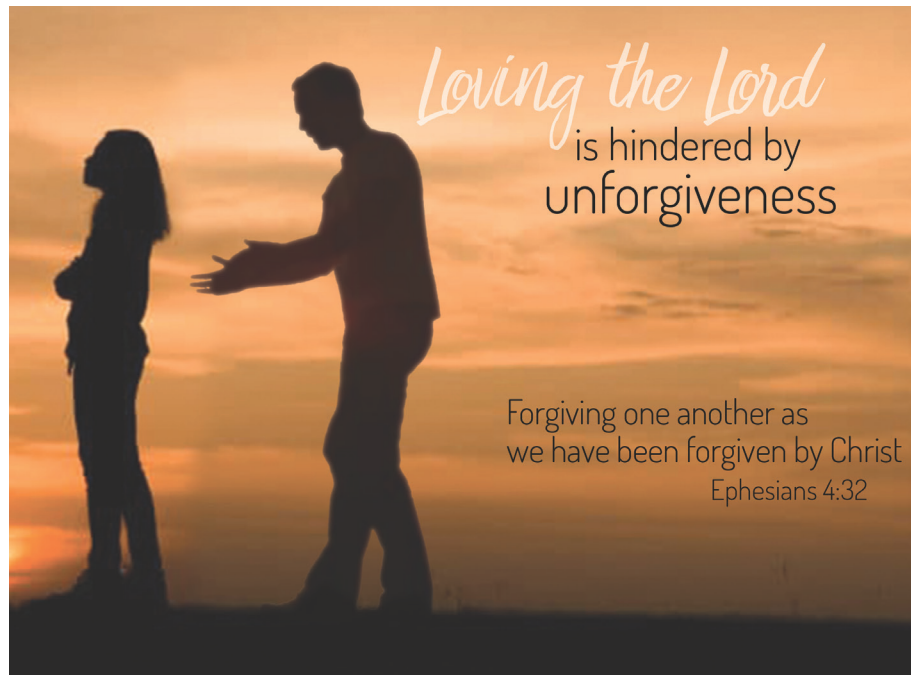


Conversation With God Kit includes:

- 8 copies of the book, *Conversation With God*
- The Spirit-Empowered Faith Set:
 - The list of 40 Indicators of what a Spirit-Empowered disciple of Christ might look like.
 - A self-assessment tool to help measure these 40 outcomes in your own life. This assessment helps you see how you are doing at embodying these 40 biblical principles.
 - Teaching notes in the form of sermon notes. These notes are broken down into 12 sections and could be used as small group leader notes, 12-part sermon series, or simply continued study and growth.

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This is a holy remembering that only comes through the working and operating of the Holy Spirit.



I. Introduction

A. Holy Remembering

“Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering” (Matthew 5:23–24 NASB).

Jesus said, in Matthew 6:12–13, *“And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”* Then Jesus adds a bit of additional commentary in verses 14–15: *“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.”*

Our communion with the Father and freedom to truly “love the Lord” (Matthew 22:37) is affected by our relationship with his children. Praying this type of prayer—“Father, forgive me as I forgive others”—is critical, as it may reveal unforgiveness in us. Loving the Lord with “all our heart” is blocked by unforgiveness.

Conversation with God is essential to our deep love of him because in prayer we come to know God more fully, and we come to know who we truly are. Jesus speaks of this kind of communion with God. If you are offering a gift at the altar, to whom are you offering your gift? You are offering it to God. You are offering your gift at the altar, and there you remember! Prayer says, “Reveal to me who you are, God, and show me who I am!” You say, “Lord, I’ve come to pray; I offer you my gift. I’ve come to surrender myself to you,” and you remember what the Scripture says.

As you are there in communion with God, the Holy Spirit speaks to you, and you remember that your brother or sister has something against you. You remember that Jesus said, “Leave your gift there, in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.” This is a holy remembering that only comes through the working and operating of the Holy Spirit.



L-5 Living with a passionate longing for purity and to please him in all things

Colossians 3:16 Moment: “Let the Word of Christ dwell deeply in you”

Pastor/Teacher:

Vulnerably share your response.

Lord, I know that I did not love well recently when _____.

Because we are citizens of the kingdom of heaven, there should be perceptible differences in the way we live our daily lives.

B: Freedom and Forgiveness

Walk in the Light of God's Word . . . Through Frequent Experiences of Scripture (John 12:35; Psalm 119:105)

“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love” (Galatians 5:13).

Pause for the next few moments, and have your own time of communion with God. Pray the following kind of prayer:

Heavenly Father, show me your forgiveness. Reveal the ways and specific times when I have received your forgiveness. Remind me of how your forgiveness has benefited me. I also ask that you reveal the true character of my heart. How am I doing at sharing your forgiveness with others?

Continue your prayer, like King David's prayer in Psalm 51:10:

Create in me a pure heart, Father. Search me and know my heart. Show me the ways I have withheld your forgiveness from others. Give me a heart that's willing to forgive.

Next, reflect on a recent time in your life when you struggled to forgive someone. Share your thoughts with Jesus. Tell him about your sadness and regret.

Father, I know that I've struggled to forgive _____.

Now prepare for a time of cleansing and renewal with Jesus:

Lord, by your Spirit, would you remove anything from my life that hinders the expression of your love? Cleanse me, forgive me, and empower me to forgive and love like Jesus forgave and loved.

II. Jesus, Our Example

A. The Father's Forgiveness

“Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing’” (Luke 23:32–34).

“Holy Spirit make me like Jesus—empower my forgiveness of others.” Forgiveness is not only an intellectual or mental exercise; it is spiritual transformation. If you are going to forgive those who have bruised you, who have hurt you, who have crushed you, it will require the power of the Holy Spirit in your life.

Offering grace and forgiveness to those who do us wrong should be a defining characteristic of those who follow Jesus.

Then Peter came to Jesus and he asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven.

“Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like . . .” (Matthew 18:21–23).

Jesus is challenging us who are citizens of the kingdom of heaven to forgive often and to forgive repeatedly.



L-10 Practicing the presence of the Lord, yielding to the Spirit's work of Christ-likeness

B. Personal Forgiveness

Walk in the Light of God's Son . . . Through Frequent Encounters with Jesus (John 12:35; John 8:12)

Pause and meditate quietly on Calvary. They beat him severely—"Father, forgive them." They nailed him to a cross—"Father, forgive them." They divided up his clothes and cast lots for them—"Father, forgive them." They didn't know what they were doing—"Father, forgive them." This is a difficult calling, but we see on the cross the Son of God who is saying, "Forgive them!" The way of the kingdom is through the cross.

"Hear Am I Lord, send me as a good steward of your forgiveness." Holy Spirit, I yield to your fresh work in me that my testimony will be, 'Father forgive them.'"

III. Holy Spirit, Our Advocate

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Corinthians 3:17).

A. Prison of Unforgiveness

There is so much hurt and so much pain in the world today. Oftentimes, it's not merely our pain, but the pain of a loved one for which we harbor unforgiveness. We long for the Holy Spirit to cause the presence and power of Jesus Christ to become alive in us so we can react to pain and suffering as Jesus did on the cross: "Father, forgive them."

The enemy holds you captive if you are in the prison of unforgiveness. But Jesus said, *"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom"* (Luke 4:18). But a transformed person, a mature person, a person who has died and been reborn, will go to his knees and say, "Father, forgive them."

Forgiveness will free you. Forgiveness will transform you. Forgiveness will enliven you. Forgiveness will change you for the better. Forgiveness will make you more like Christ. Pray now that you can release any unforgiveness in your life. Give it to God today. His hands are outstretched. He's waiting on you.

B. Advocate for Forgiveness

Walking in the light of God's people . . . Through Faithful Engagement in Fellowship (John 12:35; Matthew 5:14)

"When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me" (John 15:26).

Take the next few moments and ask the Holy Spirit to be your Advocate for forgiveness and freedom. Ask him to reveal more of Jesus as you reflect on the needs of your life and the circumstances of your world. What needs and challenges are you facing where he can empower your forgiveness, healing, and hope?

Childish prayers ask for revenge; they want God to punish those who have hurt us or those we love.



L-2 Listening to and hearing God for direction and discernment

Now ask the Holy Spirit to testify about the character of Jesus. Does the Spirit want you to know that Jesus is the All-Powerful One, the Mighty Counselor, or the Comforter? Does he want you to be reminded that he is the God of restoration and the ultimate provider of grace and forgiveness? One of the Spirit's functions is to reveal to you more of Jesus.

Pause to pray together with a partner or in your small group.

Holy Spirit, given the needs of my life and the challenges I face, what do you want to share with me about Jesus? What do you want me to hear about forgiveness? Who might I need to forgive?

Listen as the Spirit testifies about Jesus. Listen for needed forgiveness. Yield to the Spirit's prompting to forgive, to heal, and to renew hope.