

Day 18 — Forgive

MAKE ROOM FOR GOD'S HEART | Prayer & Fasting Devotional

Scripture focus: Matthew 6:12–15 • Colossians 3:12–13 • Ephesians 4:31–32 • Mark 11:25 (NIV)

Mercy received, mercy extended

Forgiveness is one of the most challenging expressions of a heart being shaped by God. Jesus places it inside the prayer He teaches His disciples: we ask the Father to forgive us, even as we are called to forgive others. Then He returns to the subject, emphasizing that our willingness to forgive is not a small or optional matter.

Yet the Scriptures do not introduce forgiveness as a demand to ignore what happened. In Colossians, Paul first reminds believers that they are chosen, holy, and dearly loved. Only then does he call them to compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness. Our response to others grows from the mercy we have already received.

Making room in the heart

Ephesians describes both a release and a replacement: put away bitterness, rage, and malice; practice kindness and compassion instead. This is not the same as pretending we were never hurt. It is allowing God to shape what our pain becomes. Anger may tell us something matters; bitterness can begin to shape how we see everyone and everything.

Mark places forgiveness in the setting of prayer. When we come before God, we can bring the entire truth of our experience—not a polished version. We can acknowledge what remains difficult while asking Him to help us respond in a way that reflects His heart.

Forgiveness does not automatically restore trust or require reconciliation. Rebuilding a relationship may depend on repentance, accountability, safety, and changed behavior. But the call to forgive still asks us to consider whether we are holding on to a debt we are unwilling to release to God.

Seeking His face

During this season of prayer and fasting, our purpose is not merely to make room for better habits. We are making room to know God more deeply. His forgiveness is not indifference toward wrongdoing; it is mercy offered in the face of real sin. As we seek His heart, we ask Him to teach us what it means to receive that mercy with gratitude and extend it with integrity.

Reflection

Is unforgiveness occupying space in my heart that I have normalized? What would it look like to invite God into that space without denying the truth of what happened?

Prayer journal prompt

Write your own prayer today. Thank God for the forgiveness you have received. Ask Him to reveal anything you are ready to surrender, and for wisdom to distinguish forgiveness from restored trust. You do not have to force an answer; begin with honesty before Him.

Today's reminder: **Forgiveness reflects God's mercy; it does not erase the need for wisdom.**