

HOW TO RUIN YOUR LIFE \ Week 3: Hold on to a Grudge

If you want to ruin your life, stay bitter. Stay offended. Lock the prison from the inside and throw away the key — just make sure you do it in Jesus' name.

The entire foundation of our faith is built on **grace we didn't deserve** and **forgiveness we couldn't earn** — and yet many of us live like we're the exception to extending it.

We don't just hold grudges over big betrayals. Sometimes it's over being unfollowed. Over being ghosted. Over a text not returned. Sometimes over our own perception. And slowly, we build invisible walls of coldness and call it wisdom.

Jesus told a story about a man who was forgiven a lifetime's worth of debt — only to throw someone else in prison over pocket change. As told this story, he wasn't being cute. He was being *clear*.

Unforgiveness won't just ruin your relationships — it will rot your soul. It warps your view of grace and distorts your connection with God because unforgiveness is a symptom of pride -of placing us into a mindset of trying to elevate ourselves above God to say that WE have a better idea of righteousness, justice, and fairness.

Grace isn't about fairness, however.

We forgive as He first forgave us - with the assurance that it's not about what the other person did or has done - it's about being transformed and renewed into the reflection of the one who first redeemed you.

DAY 1 – “When Grace Isn't Fair — and That's the Point”

Matthew 18:21–22

Grace isn't fair — and if it were, none of us would stand a chance.

Peter thought he was being generous when he asked Jesus if forgiving seven times was enough. Jewish law said three strikes and you're out, so Peter's basically flexing — “I'll double it and toss in a bonus.”

But Jesus answers, “*Not seven times... seventy-seven.*”

Translation: *Stop counting. Start becoming.*

Forgiveness isn't about keeping score — it's about keeping your heart free.

It's about remembering that every time we choose mercy, we're stepping into the same grace that saved us. And here's the humbling part: if people *really knew* how broken we were... the things they say wouldn't even scratch the surface.

As Spurgeon once said,

“If any man thinks ill of you, do not be angry with him, for you are worse than he thinks you to be.”

We don't want fairness. We want *grace*.

And Jesus says: if you've received it, you can't withhold it.

Reflect:

- What situation or person comes to mind when you hear the word “unforgiveness”?
- Have you tried to “keep score” with someone instead of releasing them?
- How have you experienced grace from God that you've struggled to offer to others?

Fight Challenge:

Flip the question.

Today, don't ask, “Do they deserve my forgiveness?”

Ask, “*Have I forgotten how much I've been forgiven?*”

Write a list of five ways God has shown you grace you didn't deserve. Let that be your starting point.

DAY 2 – “Unforgiveness Feels Right, but It Locks You Up”

Matthew 18:23–34

Unforgiveness doesn't protect you — it imprisons you.

In Jesus' parable, the servant is forgiven *ten thousand bags of gold* — and then grabs someone by the throat over *a hundred silver coins*.

The scale is absurd. The anger is real. And the result? Prison. Torture. Isolation.

Not for the offender — for the *unforgiving one*. That's what bitterness does.

It convinces you that holding onto hurt will make you feel better. But all it does is keep you trapped - troubled - upset - a mind consumed with the hurt or offense. Sometimes it means reacting to instead of reflecting and choosing.

Bitterness infects relationships and leads to other areas of sin - pride, gossip, anger...

Choosing forgiveness doesn't mean what they did was okay.

It means *they no longer get to control you*.

Reflect:

- Are you replaying someone's offense like a highlight reel in your mind?
- How has unforgiveness affected your heart, your habits, or even your health?

- What scares you most about letting go?

Fight Challenge:

Write the release.

Write a letter (you don't have to send it) to the person who hurt you.

Acknowledge the pain. Then write the words: *"I release you. I forgive you. You don't owe me anymore."*

DAY 3 – "Forgiveness Isn't Just What You Do — It's Who God Is"

Matthew 18:27

Theological truth:

Forgiveness is not a checklist to complete or a box to mark off. It's not something we grit our teeth to do once and then move on. It is, at its core, a reflection of the very heart of God. In Jesus' parable, when the king looks at his servant — overwhelmed by a debt he could never repay — he doesn't issue a lecture or demand installments. He's moved with compassion. The text says he *took pity on him, canceled the debt, and let him go.*

That single sentence is the essence of the gospel.

It is the story of what God has done for us.

And if we truly receive that story, it becomes the shape of who we are.

Forgiveness is not natural. It rarely feels fair. But it is transformational. It may not always change the person who hurt us — but it will always begin to change us.

Something begins to shift when we let go. Our hearts start to soften where they were once hardened. The icy places begin to thaw. And the people we've been holding at arm's length — with clenched fists and silent resentment — start to look human again.

Because when we return to the foot of the cross, we realize we're not standing on high ground. We're kneeling. And it's awfully hard to condemn someone else when your own heart is still resting in the mercy that saved you.

Reflect:

- Who have you been climbing up on the cross to condemn — when God is inviting you to kneel instead?
- How has God's forgiveness transformed you in ways you often forget?
- What would it look like to reflect His heart, even to someone who doesn't deserve it?

Fight Challenge:

Get low.

Find a quiet place today. Physically kneel.

Pray this out loud:

“God, Your grace covered all of me. Help me extend it. Make me a person of mercy, not just a recipient. I lay this grudge down. I choose freedom.”