become new

Forgiveness
12 Week Study Guide

bit.ly/BNSTUDY

During the Week

- Watch or listen to the three FORGIVENESS episodes for the week
- Read the assigned scripture passages
- Complete the journal questions
- Memorize the weekly verse
- Try the recommended practice for the week

When You Meet

- Open in prayer
- Recite the memory verse for each other
- The facilitator for that week leads the discussion using the journal prompts
- Share how the weekly practice went
- Close by praying for one another

Table of Contents

Welcome Page 3
Weekly Map 4–5
Week 1 6–7
Week 2 8–9
Week 3 10–11
Week 4 12–13
Week 5 14–15
Week 6 16–17
Week 7 18–19
Week 8 20–21
Week 9 22–23
Week 10 24–25
Week 11 26–27
Week 12 28–29
Memorization Overview 30–32
Practices Overview 33
Series Book List 34

become new

Forgiveness
12 Week Study Guide

Welcome to the Become New Study Guide: FORGIVENESS.

This guide is designed to help you engage John Ortberg's teaching as you grow spiritually, reflect on Scripture, and explore key themes in spiritual formation.

Each week, you'll watch or listen to three episodes, work through journal questions, and practice memorizing Scripture. **You can use this guide in one of two ways:** participants may engage **all episodes on their own** and use gathering time to discuss what stood out from the teaching, Scripture, and journaling, then pray for one another. Or, you may choose one episode from the weekly teachings to **watch together as a group** during your gathering and have participants watch the other two on their own during the week. This packet is designed to work well for both approaches.

Please print a copy of this guide (2-sided) for each participant so everyone has space to reflect and write. You'll also find room to note meeting dates and who will facilitate discussion each week. We've found rotating leadership helpful, but it's optional. Please scan the provided QR codes to access the teaching links.

This format works well for individuals, pairs, or small groups who engage the teaching independently and come together for conversation and prayer. We hope this guide helps you grow in Christ, one day at a time.

If you have questions or need support, please reach out to us at connect@becomenew.com.

– The Become New Team

Forgiveness
Weekly Map
12 Week Study Guide

wk1 *date:* *leader:*

1. **Meet the Forgiveness Expert**
2. **Darkness of Heart**
3. **How to R.E.A.C.H. for Forgiveness**

wk2 *date:* *leader:*

4. **Forgiveness is Possible**
5. **The Road to NOT Forgiving**
6. **A Hurting World**

wk3 *date:* *leader:*

7. **Seeing with 'Magic Eyes'**
8. **Recall the Hurt**
9. **Waiting on the Front Porch of Forgiveness**

wk4 *date:* *leader:*

10. **Defining Forgiveness**
11. **Forgiveness and Reconciliation**
12. **Lincoln: A Forgiveness Hero**

wk5 *date:* *leader:*

13. **Reasons to Forgive**
14. **You are Forgiven**
15. **Mind the (Injustice) Gap**

wk6 *date:* *leader:*

16. **How to have Empathy**
17. **All We Like Jonah**
18. **Forgiving without Forgetting**

Shine : The Book of Philippians

Weekly Map

12 Week Study Guide

wk7 *date:* *leader:*

19. **Bowels of Compassion?**
20. **Two Chairs**
21. **Forgive Us as We Forgive**

wk8 *date:* *leader:*

22. **Do You Dare Forgive Yourself?**
23. **Forgiving God?**
24. **The Great Restoration of Ourselves**

wk9 *date:* *leader:*

25. **How to Resolve Conflict (part 1)**
26. **How to Resolve Conflict (part 2)**
27. **Joseph and the Undoing of Brokenness**

wk10 *date:* *leader:*

28. **Hatred and Forgiveness**
29. **Holding onto Forgiveness**
30. **Wholesale Forgiving**

wk11 *date:* *leader:*

31. **Praying for Your Enemy**
32. **You are Forgiven**
33. **Should You Make Peace with Them?**

wk12 *date:* *leader:*

34. **The Courage to Confront Conflict**
35. **Is Love Stronger Than Hate?**
36. **Why You Should Become a Forgiving Person**

Week 1 : The Sacred Work of Forgiveness

Assigned Reading: Matthew 5, Ephesians 4

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these words/phrases stand out to you?

bit.ly/BNSTUDY

---

3. Why do you think confession often precedes meaningful forgiveness in relationships?

4. What part of the R.E.A.C.H. model feels most difficult for you personally, and why?

6. What stories are you telling yourself that might make it difficult for you to forgive others?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week ONE:

Ephesians 4:31–32 (NIV)
Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Choose one hurt (not the biggest one) & walk thru this simple version of R.E.A.C.H.:
Recall the hurt briefly
Empathize as best you can
Say (out loud or in writing): "I choose to forgive ___"
Write it down as a commitment

Week 2 : Our World Needs Forgivers

Assigned Reading: Micah 7, Genesis 4

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these words/phrases stand out to you?

bit.ly/BNSTUDY

---

3. How do you see forgiveness as "supernatural," and what does that imply about our role vs. God's role?

4. How do you distinguish between feeling hurt and actually living in unforgiveness?

6. What does it mean that "sin is crouching at your door," and how have you experienced that in your own life?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week TWO:

Micah 7:18 (NIV)
Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.

When you notice yourself replaying a hurt (the conversation, the tone, the moment), pause and name it: *"This is rumination."*
Then gently redirect your mind to something constructive (prayer, truth, or action).

Week 3 : Learning to See Anew

Assigned Reading: Genesis 37, Luke 15

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these words/phrases stand out to you?

bit.ly/BNSTUDY

---

3. Where in your life might you be practicing "hollow forgiveness", that is: saying the words without heart change?

4. What "pebbles" (small or large hurts) have you been carrying without realizing it?

5. What does the "front porch" represent in your life right now? Where you are waiting without control?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week THREE:

Luke 15:20 (NIV)
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.

Identify one person you struggle to forgive and pray honestly:
"God, I don't see them rightly. Give me new eyes."
You don't have to feel it yet, just ask.

Week 4 : "With Malice Toward None"

Assigned Reading: Deuteronomy 23, Psalm 139

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these words/phrases stand out to you?

bit.ly/BNSTUDY

---

3. Where do you feel tension between forgiveness and justice in your own thinking?

4. How does Abraham Lincoln's example challenge your current posture toward enemies or critics?

5. Is there someone in your life you've decided to forgive but not reconcile with? Why?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week FOUR:

Matthew 5:44 (NIV)
But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Identify someone you feel resentment toward.
Do one small, concrete act of goodwill toward them (or for their benefit):
Pray for them
Speak well of them
Serve them quietly

Week 5 : Forgiveness Defined

Assigned Reading: 1 Peter 3, 1 Thessalonians 5

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these words/phrases stand out to you?

bit.ly/BNSTUDY

---

3. Reflect on the forgiveness God give you, how does that change your posture toward others?

4. Why do you suppose forgiving "for your own benefit" ultimately holds less power than forgiving as a free gift?

5. What is one "injustice gap" in your life right now, and how are you responding to it?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week FIVE:

---

1 Peter 3:9 (NIV)
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.

Take 10 minutes and write your personal reasons to forgive in four areas:
Physical health, Emotional health, Relational health, Spiritual life

Week 6 : Forgiving without Forgetting

Assigned Reading: Luke 23, Jonah 4

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these words/phrases stand out to you?

bit.ly/BNSTUDY

---

3. What makes it difficult for you to "see" someone who has hurt you as a full human being?

4. In what ways are you tempted to be like Jonah: dividing the world into "us vs. them"?

5. Does understanding that forgiveness doesn't require forgetting change your willingness to forgive? How so?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week SIX:

Luke 23:34
Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Do the physical exercise: clench your fists and hold the "weight" of resentment, then open your hands and drop them. As you do, say:

"I choose to forgive. I will not rehearse this anymore."

Week 7 : Cultivating a Soft Heart

Assigned Reading: Psalm 103, Colossians 3

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these words/phrases stand out to you?

bit.ly/BNSTUDY

---

3. Does recognizing that “hurt people hurt people” shape your ability to feel compassion? Why or why not?

4. What emotions or resistance come up when you imagine sitting across from someone who hurt you?

5. In what ways do you struggle to believe that you yourself are truly forgiven?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week SEVEN:

Psalm 103:12–13 (NIV)
As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

Do the "Two Chairs" Exercise. Set aside 10–15 minutes:
Speak honestly to the person who hurt you (empty chair)
Then switch chairs and respond as them
Let yourself feel it. Let it surprise you.

Week 8 : Forgive Yourself

Assigned Reading: 1 John 1, Psalm 22

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these words/phrases stand out to you?

bit.ly/BNSTUDY

---

3. Describe a time you felt angry toward God. Have you moved past this? How or how not?

4. Is there some way in which you struggle to forgive yourself or accept God's forgiveness?

5. Where in your life do you need restoration, not just relief from guilt, but becoming whole again?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week EIGHT:

---

1 John 1:9 (NIV)
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Write down one specific thing you need to forgive yourself for.
Not vague, be specific.
Then say (out loud if possible): *"Heavenly Father, this was wrong. Please forgive me. I commit my life to you again this day. In Jesus' name: it is forgiven."*

Week 9 : Honest Hearts, Lasting Change

Assigned Reading: Genesis 50, Ephesians 4

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these words/phrases stand out to you?

bit.ly/BNSTUDY

---

3. When you're "flooded" emotionally, how do you typically respond (fight, flight, or freeze)? What are the circumstances that bring these responses out in you?

4. Describe a current area of your life that might require reconciliation. What is keeping you from moving toward this?

5. What suffering or loss are you experiencing right now and how might it become an invitation to deeper intimacy with Jesus?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week NINE:

Genesis 50:20 (NIV)
"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

When emotions spike, give yourself a "time-out."
Step away
Take a walk and pray.
Wait ~20 minutes
Don't try to resolve conflict in "bird brain."

Week 10 : Honest Hearts, Lasting Change

Assigned Reading: Luke 23, Romans 12

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these words/phrases stand out to you?

bit.ly/BNSTUDY

---

3. What makes forgiveness something you must “hold onto” rather than complete once?

4. What is the difference between forgiving someone for what they did vs. accepting who they are?

5. Have you ever experienced feeling hatred toward someone? Describe it. How did this resolve?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week TEN:

Romans 12:21 (NIV)
Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Practice specific forgiveness. This week, write down three past (or recent) hurts you struggle to forgive and name them outloud using this language:

"I forgive NAME for saying _____… as Christ forgave me."
"I forgive NAME for doing _____… as Christ forgave me."

Week 11 : From Enemy to Neighbor

Assigned Reading: Matthew 5, 2 Corinthians 5

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these words/phrases stand out to you?

bit.ly/BNSTUDY

---

3. Think of an "enemy" you might have. Write a prayer for them:

4. How have you personally been an 'agent of reconciliation' in the past?

5. Is there an area of your life you've *known* you're forgiven, but struggled to *feel* forgiven? Why is that do you think?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week ELEVEN:

---

2 Corinthians 5:18–19 (NIV)
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.

Ask yourself, "Is there a relationship where I can wisely take a step of reconciliation?"
Then do one thing:
Send a message, offer an apology, open a conversation.
Don't resolve everything. Just start the bridge.

Week 12 : That's the Power of Love

Assigned Reading: Romans 8, Jeremiah 29

1. Write down key words/phrases that stood out to you from the reading or the teaching.

2. Why did these words/phrases stand out to you?

bit.ly/BNSTUDY

---

3. In what ways have you experienced love being stronger than hate in your life?

4. What does it mean that forgiveness is not just therapeutic, but participation in God's work?

5. What would change in your life if you truly believed "everything sad will come untrue"?

Pause. Listen for God's voice in your heart. What is He saying to you?

Write your personal prayer of response to God for this week:

memorization & practice week TWELVE:

Colossians 3:13 (NIV)
Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Take one painful experience and ask, "Holy Spirit, how might you want to bring good from this pain?" Listen and write down what you hear.

BONUS: Download the 2-hour worksheet from Ev Worthington and complete it! https://bit.ly/REACHWorksheet

MEMORIZATION

Become New : SHINE

Week 1

Ephesians 4:31–32 (NIV)
Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

Week 2

Micah 7:18 (NIV)
Who is a God like you, who pardons sin and forgives the transgression of the remnant of his inheritance? You do not stay angry forever but delight to show mercy.

Week 3

Luke 15:20 (NIV)
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.

Week 4

Matthew 5:44 (NIV)
But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

Week 5

1 Peter 3:9 (NIV)
"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."

Week 6

Luke 23:34
Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.' And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Week 7

Psalm 103:12–13 (NIV)
As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

Week 8

1 John 1:9 (NIV)
If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Week 9

Genesis 50:20 (NIV)
"You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."

Week 10

Romans 12:21 (NIV)
Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Week 11

2 Corinthians 5:18–19 (NIV)
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.

Week 12

Colossians 3:13 (NIV)
Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Practices

Week 1
Choose one hurt (not the biggest one) & walk thru a simple version of R.E.A.C.H

Week 2
When you notice yourself replaying a hurt (the conversation, the tone, the moment), pause and name it: "This is rumination." Then gently redirect your mind.

Week 3
Identify one person you struggle to forgive and pray honestly the "new-eyes" prayer.

Week 4
Identify someone you feel resentment toward & do one smallact of goodwill toward them

Week 5
Take 10 minutes and write your personal reasons to forgive in four areas:
Physical health, Emotional health, Relational health, Spiritual life

Week 6
Do the clench your fists exercise. As you do, say:
"I choose to forgive. I will not rehearse this anymore."

Week 7
Set aside 10–15 minutes and do the "Two Chairs" exercise.

Week 8
Write down one specific thing you need to forgive yourself for - offer the provided prayer.

Week 9
When emotions spike, give yourself a "time-out."

Week 10
Practice specific forgiveness. This week, write down three past (or recent) hurts you struggle to forgive and name them outloud with the provided forgiveness statement.

Week 11
Start a bridge of reconciliation with one person (using wisdom and discernment).

Week 12
Take one painful experience and ask, "Holy Spirit, how might you want to bring good from this pain?" Listen and write down what you hear.

Books Referenced During this Series:

Forgive and Forget by Lewis B. Smedes
The Human Condition by Hannah Arendt
East of Eden by John Steinbeck
Blood Brothers by Elias Chacour
The Sunflower by Simon Wiesenthal
Lincoln: An Ethical Biography by William Lee Miller
Justice in Love by Nicholas Wolterstorff
The Sovereignty of Good by Iris Murdoch
The Weight of Glory by C. S. Lewis
Les Misérables by Victor Hugo
Exclusion and Embrace by Miroslav Volf
Free of Charge by Miroslav Volf
Gilead by Marilynne Robinson
The Wretched of the Earth by Frantz Fanon
The Brothers Karamazov by Fyodor Dostoevsky
The Return of the King by J. R. R. Tolkien