

A Workbook for Healing and Recovery

Who Will Love Me Now?

*God's Embrace After
Divorce*



JIMMY EVANS
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ISBN: 978-1-960870-82-7 eBook
ISBN: 978-1-960870-83-4 Paperback

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Printed in the United States of America

26 27 28 29—5 4 3 2 1

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INTRODUCTION

A Letter to the Brokenhearted



If you're holding this book, chances are your world has been turned upside down. Maybe your divorce is final. Maybe it's in process. Maybe you're still in that terrible limbo where you know it's coming but it hasn't happened yet. Divorce is ugly, messy, painful, and a whole lot of other adjectives we could use.

But wherever you are in this journey, we want you to know something right now: **You're going to make it through this.**

We know that it might be hard to believe. Right now, you might feel like you're drowning. You might wake up every morning with that sick feeling in your stomach as reality crashes over you again: *My marriage is over*. Or you might lie awake at night replaying conversations in your head, wondering what you could have done differently, or feeling overwhelmed by the practical realities of rebuilding your life.

Maybe you're angry. Maybe you're heartbroken. Maybe you're relieved but also terrified. More than likely, you're all of these things at once, cycling through emotions so fast you can barely keep track.

Whatever you're feeling, it's valid. And you're not alone.

Why Did We Write This Book?

Over the years, we've encountered hundreds of struggling couples. Many worked through difficulties and came out stronger. But many others didn't make it. We have sat with men and women in the wreckage of their divorces, walked with them through the struggle, and witnessed them slowly rebuild. Our passion has always been to help people experience the abundant life God promises—whether that's in marriage or in the healing that comes after.

Through this work, clear patterns have emerged. Certain approaches help people heal while others keep them stuck. Some responses to trauma lead to freedom; others lead to deeper bondage. This book represents everything we know about what actually works—drawn from real people going through real pain, people just like you who thought their lives were over and discovered that God had other plans.

Together, we've created this resource because we believe you deserve more than platitudes and surface-level advice. You deserve a roadmap that's both psychologically sound and

spiritually grounded. You deserve practical tools alongside pastoral care. You deserve someone who will be honest with you about how hard this is while also giving you real hope for what's ahead.

We're not going to sugarcoat this. Divorce recovery is **hard work**. But we've seen too many people come through it stronger, wiser, and more whole to let you believe that healing isn't possible. It is possible. And we're going to walk through this with you.

What This Book Is (and What It Isn't)

We want you to understand from the start: **This is a healing book**. Let us put it as plainly as we know how—**we want to see you healed and whole again**. In this book, we're going to focus on forgiveness, grief, acceptance, and rebuilding your life. **We're not going to spend much time on dating or new relationships**.

Why? Because until you're healed, you're not ready to bring someone else into your life. Part of being a loving person is treating someone the way you would want to be treated. If you're not healed, you won't be the person they need. In fact, you might be precisely the person they don't need. You'll bring your wounds, your patterns, and your unresolved issues into that new relationship.

Dating and relationships—**that's phase two**. We will touch briefly on this topic a few times in the book. But the deeper preparation needed to begin dating again is for another resource after you've done this foundational work. For now, we're focusing on you and your healing.

This book is different from other divorce recovery resources you might have encountered. It's not just a book to read—it's a workbook designed for you to actively engage with your healing process.

Healing from divorce isn't a passive process. You can't just wait for time to pass so you can feel better. You have to actively work through your pain, make difficult choices, and take concrete steps toward rebuilding. This workbook is designed to guide you through that active process.

The Framework We'll Use

Most divorce recovery programs focus on the "Five Stages of Grief" that Elisabeth Kübler-Ross made famous. You've probably heard of them: **denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance**. And while those stages aren't wrong exactly, they weren't designed for what you're going through. Kübler-Ross developed them by observing terminally ill patients facing their own death—not people going through divorce.

Instead, we're going to use a framework that looks at grief as tasks to be accomplished, based on "The Four Tasks of Mourning." Psychologist J. William Worden developed this approach. Here are **three reasons** we believe this approach is better for you:

1. **Tasks give you something concrete to do.** Instead of passively waiting to feel better, you can take actual steps toward healing right now. You're not a passenger on a grief train—you're actively working toward recovery.
2. **Tasks don't have to be completed in order.** You might work on accepting reality while also processing grief and adjusting to practical changes. It's ongoing work, not a linear progression.
3. **Tasks acknowledge that your ex is still alive.** Divorce grief, in many ways, is more complicated than death grief because you might have to see your ex at custody exchanges, deal with ongoing legal issues, or watch them move on with their life. The task-based approach was designed to handle this level of complexity.

The **four tasks** we'll work through together are:

1. **Accept the reality of the loss**—Acknowledging with your whole being that your marriage is over
2. **Process the pain of grief**—Feeling and working through your emotions in healthy ways
3. **Adjust to life without your spouse**—Managing both external changes (finances, household) and internal changes (identity, decision-making)
4. **Maintain a connection while moving forward**—Keeping what's valuable from your marriage experience while investing in your future

How to Use This Book

In the first chapters of the book, we focus on the emotional and spiritual work of recovery. We'll tackle forgiveness (even when it feels impossible), grief, acceptance, and understanding your identity in Christ.

In the remaining chapters, we give attention to the practical work of rebuilding. We'll address co-parenting, financial recovery, building community, and stepping into your new chapter with confidence.

The book includes:

- **Core teaching** on that chapter's topic
- **Reflection Questions** to help you think deeply about how this applies to your situation
- **Journaling Space** for you to process your thoughts and emotions
- **Practical Exercises** to help you apply what you're learning
- **Self-assessment inventories** to help you understand where you are and track your progress
- **Action Steps**—specific, concrete things you can do to move forward

Here's our advice for getting the most out of this resource:

- **Don't rush through it.** This isn't a book to finish quickly. Most people take 4–6 months to work through this entire book. It's okay if it takes longer. Take your time with each chapter. Sit with the hard questions. Do the exercises thoroughly. Some chapters might take you several days to work through, and that's perfectly okay.
- **Be brutally honest.** The journaling sections are for you alone. **No one else needs to see what you write.** In fact, we recommend that no one looks at it besides you unless you're in a support or counseling setting. This is your safe space to express what you're really thinking and feeling—the anger, the fear, the doubts, the shame, all of it. God can handle your honesty, and so can you.
- **Don't skip the exercises.** We know it's tempting to just read through the teaching sections and skip the interactive parts. **Don't.** The exercises are where the actual healing work happens. Reading about forgiveness is one thing; actually working through the forgiveness process is another.
- **Find a support system.** Consider working through this book with a trusted friend, a counselor, a pastor, or a divorce recovery group. Having someone to process with makes a huge difference.
- **Give yourself grace.** Some days you'll have the energy to dig deep. Other days you'll only be able to read a few paragraphs. Both are okay. No one is giving you a grade.

A Note About Faith

This book is written from a Christian perspective because we believe that God is the ultimate source of healing and restoration. Throughout these pages, you'll find Scripture, prayers, and theological perspectives on divorce and recovery.

But we also want to be clear: **if you're angry at God right now, that's okay.** If you're questioning your faith, that's okay too. God is big enough to handle your doubts, your anger, and your questions. Some of the most faithful people in the Bible—Job, David, Jeremiah—expressed raw, honest anger and confusion to God.

You don't have to have perfect faith to start this journey. You just have to be willing to take the next step.

A Word About God's Heart for You

We need to address something that might be weighing on you: *Did I fail God?*

Here's what we want you to understand: God's ideal is for marriages to succeed. He designed marriage, He loves marriage, and divorce is never His first choice. Malachi 2:16 makes it clear that God "hates" divorce.

But here's the crucial distinction: **God hates divorce because He sees what it does to people He loves.** He hates the pain, the brokenness, and the devastation it causes. **But He doesn't hate divorced people.** There's a huge difference.

We stand firmly for marriage, even though we recognize it sometimes doesn't work out. When divorce happens, whether by your choice, your spouse's choice, or mutual decision, **God doesn't abandon you.** He becomes your primary source of healing. He's the only truly reliable source who can restore your wounded heart.

Yes, God wanted your marriage to work. That is what we believe. Marriage between a man and woman for life is God's ideal. But now that it hasn't happened that way, He wants your healing just as much as He wanted to heal your broken relationship. He's not standing there disappointed in you. He's ready to be your Healer, your Comforter, and the Restorer of your soul.

The same God who battles for marriage loves you completely and is committed to fighting for your healing and restoration.

The Truth About What Lies Ahead

We're not going to give you a bunch of empty promises. This might be one of the hardest things you've ever done. Some days you'll want to quit. Some days you'll wonder if healing is even possible. Some days you'll be angry that you have to do this work at all.

But here's what we can tell you: **You don't have to do this alone.** God meets people in their darkest moments—not with platitudes, but with presence. Not with explanations, but with comfort. Not with quick fixes, but with the slow, steady work of rebuilding what's been broken.

You are not the first person to sit where you're sitting right now. Others have cried these same tears, felt this same crushing weight of loss, failure, and fear. And they've come through it—not unchanged, but changed for the better. Not without scars, but with scars that tell a story of survival and strength.

You're not reading this book by accident. Something in you—maybe it's faith, maybe it's desperation, maybe it's just the tiniest flicker of hope—brought you here. That's enough for right now.

Before You Begin

This isn't a book you read casually. It's a book you work through. So before you turn to Chapter 1, set yourself up for success:

Get what you need physically:

- ☐ A dedicated journal for additional reflections
- ☐ Pens, highlighters, sticky notes

- ☐ A box of tissues (we're serious)
- ☐ A consistent, quiet place to work where you won't be interrupted

Get what you need relationally:

- ☐ Tell someone you trust that you're doing this work.
- ☐ Ask them to check in with you weekly.
- ☐ Consider finding a pastor, a counselor, or joining a divorce recovery group.
- ☐ If at all possible, don't try to do this completely alone.

Get what you need spiritually:

- ☐ Pray—even if it's just “God, I need help.”
- ☐ Invite God into this process, even if you're angry with Him right now.
- ☐ Be honest about where you are; He already knows anyway.

Get what you need mentally:

- ☐ Set realistic expectations—this could take months, not weeks.
- ☐ Commit to doing the work, not just reading the words.
- ☐ Give yourself permission to feel whatever comes up.

One more thing: **If you're in crisis—if you're having thoughts of harming yourself or others—please stop right now and call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988 or go to your nearest emergency room.** This book is a tool for healing, but it's not a substitute for professional help in a crisis.

Your First Step

Take a deep breath.

You've already taken the hardest step: you've admitted you need help, and you've shown up to do the work.

Everything else, we'll figure out together—one chapter, one exercise, one day at a time.

Now turn the page, and let's begin.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- This workbook meets you where you are—whether your divorce was yesterday or years ago, whether you wanted it or not.
- Healing isn't linear, and there's no “right” timeline. Work through these chapters at your own pace.
- You don't have to do this alone. God is with you, and community support makes the journey easier.

What Forgiveness Is (and Why It Matters)



At the very start of our work together, we need to talk about something that might make you want to close this book right now—**forgiveness**. We know, we know. Some of you are already thinking, *“You have no idea what they did to me. You don’t understand how badly they hurt me.”* And you’re absolutely right—we don’t know your specific story.

But here’s what we do know about every person reading this: **Someone hurt you deeply**. And if we’re being completely honest, there’s probably a part of you that wants them to pay for what they did.

That’s a totally normal emotion. When someone completely wrecks your life, betrays your trust, or just walks away, something inside you screams, *“They can’t just get away with this!”*

But before you skip this chapter (and we know you’re tempted), hear us out. We’re not going to ask you to do anything you’re not ready for. We’re just going to explain what forgiveness actually is, what it isn’t, and why it matters for your healing. You can decide what to do with that information.

What Forgiveness Is *Not*

Before we tell you what forgiveness actually is, let us be really clear about what it’s not, because there’s a lot of terrible advice floating around about this topic.

- **Forgiveness doesn’t mean you’re saying what they did was okay.** If your ex cheated, abused you, or completely abandoned you, forgiving them doesn’t mean you’re pretending that behavior was acceptable. Wrong is still wrong. Sin is still sin. Betrayal is still betrayal.¹
- **Forgiveness isn’t about trusting them again.** Trust is something that gets rebuilt through consistent actions over time.² You can forgive someone and still have very firm boundaries with them. In fact, healthy forgiveness often requires boundaries. Forgiveness opens your heart; wisdom protects it.
- **Forgiveness doesn’t mean you have to forget what happened.** Your brain is literally designed to remember painful experiences so you can protect yourself and stay away from

the same sort of harm.³ You're not supposed to develop amnesia about your divorce. God gave you a memory for a reason—to learn, to grow, and to make wiser choices in the future.

- **Forgiveness definitely doesn't mean you have to stay in an abusive situation.** God never asks you to be someone's punching bag, whether that's physical, emotional, or psychological abuse.⁴ You can forgive someone and still remove yourself from harm's way. In fact, sometimes the most loving thing you can do—for yourself and even for them—is to create distance.
- **Here's the big one that really trips people up: forgiveness isn't about removing consequences.** If someone betrayed you and destroyed your marriage, they don't get to just waltz back into your life like nothing happened just because you chose to forgive them. Forgiveness doesn't erase the natural consequences of destructive choices.⁵

Think about it this way: If someone embezzles money from their employer and truly repents, God forgives them. But they might still go to jail. That's not because forgiveness failed—it's because consequences teach us and protect others. The same principle applies in relationships.



PAUSE AND REFLECT

Before we go further, take a moment to think about your own misconceptions regarding forgiveness.

Which of these forgiveness myths have you been believing?

- ☐ Forgiveness means saying what they did was okay.
- ☐ Forgiveness means I have to trust them again.
- ☐ Forgiveness means I have to forget what happened.
- ☐ Forgiveness means I have to stay in contact with them.
- ☐ Forgiveness means removing all consequences.
- ☐ Other: _____

How has believing these myths kept you stuck or made forgiveness feel impossible?

What Forgiveness Actually Is

So what is forgiveness, really? **Biblical forgiveness means you're releasing someone from the debt they owe you.**⁶

When someone hurts you badly, they create a debt. They owe you something. An apology, for one. Maybe some kind of justice. Or an acknowledgment of what they did. Maybe restitution for what they took or destroyed. Maybe years of your life that you'll never get back.

Forgiveness means you are going to stop trying to collect on that debt.

It's like canceling someone's loan. When you forgive them, you're basically saying, *"I know you hurt me. And you owe me. But I'm choosing to let go of trying to make you pay for it. I'm not going to spend my energy trying to collect what you owe me."*

Here's why this matters so much: **When you refuse to forgive, you become emotionally chained to the person who hurt you.**⁷ Every day you spend angry, bitter, or resentful—that's mental and emotional energy you're giving to them. That's space in your head and heart they're still occupying.

Have you considered how much time you spend thinking about your ex? Replaying conversations? Imagining what you should have said? Planning what you'll say next time? Checking their social media? Asking mutual friends about them? Fantasizing about them somehow realizing what they lost? Hoping they'll suffer the way you've suffered?

All of that energy—that's energy they're stealing from you **even now**. It's like there's a room in your heart where you keep all the hurt, and you go there every single day to relive it—to get wounded all over again. Forgiveness is about locking the door to that room and refusing to go back.⁸



EXERCISE: THE DEBT INVENTORY (PART 1)

This exercise will help you identify exactly what "debts" you're holding onto so you can begin the process of releasing them. We're going to do this in stages throughout this chapter.

Right now, just make a list of everything your ex "owes" you. Be specific. Don't censor yourself—no one else needs to see this.

These might include:

- An apology for specific actions
- Acknowledgment of how they hurt you
- Justice or consequences for what they did
- The years you gave to the marriage
- The dreams and plans that were destroyed
- Financial losses
- Damage to your reputation
- The pain they caused your children
- Your sense of security and trust

My list of debts (we will be coming back to this list):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

The Parable That Changes Everything

Jesus told a story in Matthew 18 that helps us understand why forgiveness matters so much. There was a servant who owed his king millions of dollars—an impossible debt he could never repay. The king had every right to throw him in prison and sell his entire family into slavery to recover the money.

But when the servant begged for mercy, the king did something shocking: He completely wiped out the debt. All of it. Millions of dollars—gone. The servant walked away free.

But then that very same servant found someone who owed him a few dollars—pocket change compared to what he'd just been forgiven. And he had that person thrown in prison for not paying up.

When the king heard about this injustice, he was furious. He basically said, “I forgave you a massive debt, and you couldn’t forgive someone pocket change?” And the king threw him into prison until he could pay back everything he owed—which would, of course, be never.

Here’s the point: **God has forgiven you for so much.** All your mistakes, all the ways you’ve messed up, all the times you’ve hurt others, all the ways you’ve fallen short of His glory—all of them—completely forgiven through Jesus. In Colossians 2:13–14 the apostle Paul says,

You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.

Paul is making the point that there is no way a dead person can pay a debt. Only God could make us alive and pay our debt for us.

And now the King of the whole universe is asking you to extend that same grace to others.

It’s not because they deserve it. Not because it’s fair. Not because what they did is somehow less serious than your sins. **It’s because you’ve been forgiven much more than you could ever count.**

When you truly grasp how much you’ve been forgiven, it changes how you view forgiving others. You start to see that holding onto unforgiveness is like someone who’s been rescued from drowning refusing to throw a life preserver to someone else.



REFLECTION MOMENT

Take a few minutes to honestly consider these three questions:

What are some things God has forgiven you for? (Be specific, even if it’s just between you and God.)

When you compare what God has forgiven you for with what you need to forgive your ex for, what do you notice?

How does understanding God's forgiveness toward you change your perspective on forgiving your ex?

Why Forgiveness Is Necessary for Your Healing

Let us tell you what happens when you don't forgive—because it's not pretty.

You may have heard it said that bitterness is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. That's true, but it's even worse than that. **Unforgiveness actually makes you sick—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.**

Medical research shows that people who hold onto anger and resentment have higher rates of heart disease, depression, anxiety, and immune system problems.⁹ The stress hormones that flood your body when you're bitter literally damage your organs over time. Refusing to forgive is toxic to your body. **It's actually poison.**¹⁰

But beyond the health issues, unforgiveness keeps you completely stuck. As long as you're obsessing over what they did to you, you can't focus on what God wants to do through you. As long as you're living in the past, you can't step into your future.

The Bible warns us: "Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many" (Hebrews 12:15). **Did you notice that?** Bitterness doesn't stay contained. **It spreads.** It's like a cancer that metastasizes.

It will also affect your other relationships. You'll find yourself suspicious of everyone, always waiting for the next betrayal.¹¹ It will impact your children if you have them; they'll absorb your bitterness even if you never speak it out loud.¹² It will stifle your relationship with God because unforgiveness creates a barrier between you and the Father who forgave you everything (See Matthew 6:14–15).

Here's the question that really matters: **Do you deserve to be free?**

Because that's what this is really about.

The person who hurt you might **never** apologize. Let that sink in for a minute. They might **never** acknowledge what they did. They might **never** face any consequences. They might go on to live a happy life while you're stuck in pain.

You could wait your whole life for justice that never comes. You could spend decades hoping they'll finally see what they did wrong. You could waste precious years waiting for an apology that will never arrive.

Or you could choose freedom now.¹³



EXERCISE: THE DEBT INVENTORY (PART 2)

Now let's go back to that list of debts you made earlier.

Next to each debt, write down what you've been doing to try to "collect" on it.

For example:

- **Waiting for an apology** → Replaying conversations in my head, hoping they'll realize what they did
- **Wanting justice** → Telling everyone who will listen what they did, hoping it damages their reputation
- **Wanting them to hurt** → Checking their social media hoping to see they're miserable

Go through your list now:

1. Debt: _____

How I try to collect: _____

2. Debt: _____

How I try to collect: _____

3. Debt: _____

How I try to collect: _____

Continue adding to this list if there are more debts.

Now answer this question: How much energy are you spending trying to collect these debts?

- ☐ A little bit of my mental/emotional energy
- ☐ A moderate amount
- ☐ A significant amount
- ☐ It consumes most of my thoughts and energy

What would you do with that energy if you weren't spending it on collecting these debts?

When Forgiveness Feels Impossible

We want to be honest with you: **Forgiveness is one of the hardest things you'll ever do.** There might be days when you think you've forgiven your ex, and then something triggers you and all the anger comes flooding back. That's normal. **Forgiveness is a process, not a one-time event.**

There might be layers to your forgiveness. You might forgive them for the big betrayal but then discover you also need to forgive them for a hundred small betrayals. You might forgive them for what they did to you but then realize you need to forgive them separately for what they did to your children. Each layer needs its own forgiveness.

And here's something we need to address: **Forgiveness doesn't mean your feelings change immediately.** You might choose to forgive someone and still feel angry when you think about them. That's okay. Forgiveness is primarily **a choice of your will, not a feeling.** The feelings often follow later, sometimes much later.¹⁴

Think of forgiveness like this: **It's deciding to cancel the debt even when your emotions are still screaming that they should pay.** It's choosing to release them even when everything in you wants to hold on. It's an act of obedience to God, not an act of emotion.

You might be reading this and thinking, *"But they're not even sorry. How can I forgive someone who doesn't think they did anything wrong?"*

Here's the truth: Their repentance makes reconciliation possible, but it's not required for your forgiveness.¹⁵ **You can forgive someone who never asks for forgiveness.** You can release them from the debt even if they don't think they owe you anything.¹⁶

Why can you do this? It's because your forgiveness is primarily about your freedom, not their repentance. You're not forgiving them because they've earned it or deserved it. You're forgiving them because you're choosing not to let their actions continue to imprison you.



SELF-ASSESSMENT: WHERE AM I IN THE FORGIVENESS PROCESS?

Read each statement and mark how true it is for you right now:

1 = Not at all true | 2 = Slightly true | 3 = Moderately true | 4 = Mostly true | 5 = Completely true

- ☐ I think about my ex and what they did multiple times every day.
- ☐ I feel angry or bitter when I think about my ex.
- ☐ I hope my ex suffers consequences for what they did.
- ☐ I check up on my ex (social media or asking friends).
- ☐ I rehearse conversations with my ex in my head.
- ☐ I feel a sense of victory when bad things happen to my ex.

- ___ I struggle to pray for my ex's wellbeing.
- ___ I badmouth my ex to others.
- ___ I feel like my ex still has power over my emotional state.
- ___ I would feel upset if my ex found happiness.

Total Score: _____

What your score means:

- ▶ **40-50:** You're in the early stages of forgiveness. The wounds are still very fresh, and you're carrying a lot of pain and anger. That's okay—it's where most people start. This chapter is especially important for you.
- ▶ **30-39:** You're making progress but still struggling with significant bitterness. You have good days and bad days. Keep working through this process.
- ▶ **20-29:** You're well into the forgiveness journey. You still have moments of anger, but they don't control you like they used to. Keep moving forward.
- ▶ **10-19:** You're far along in the forgiveness process. You've released most of the bitterness and are experiencing significant freedom. Well done.
- ▶ **Below 10:** You've done remarkable work in forgiveness. You're experiencing the freedom that comes from releasing the debt. Your task now is to maintain this freedom.

Regardless of your score, remember: Forgiveness unfolds over time.

The First Step Toward Forgiveness

As we already said, we know this is hard. Maybe the last thing you want to do right now is forgive the person who completely turned your world upside down.

We're not asking you to manufacture feelings you don't have. We're not asking you to pretend everything is fine.

Here's something you can do right now if you're ready: Just say out loud,

God, I want to be free more than I want to hold onto my anger. Help me forgive [their name]. I don't know how to do this, but I'm willing to learn. In Jesus' name, Amen.

That's it. You don't have to feel it yet. You just have to be willing to move in the direction of forgiveness.

Maybe you're not even at the point of wanting to forgive yet. That's okay too. You can pray something like this:

God, I'm not ready to forgive [their name] yet. I'm being honest—I still want them to hurt like I'm hurting. But I don't want to stay stuck here. Please change my heart. Help me get to the place where I actually want to be free. In Jesus' name, Amen.

God can handle your honesty. He'd rather you tell Him the truth than pretend to feel something you don't.

The journey of forgiveness starts with one honest prayer. It continues with daily choices to release bitterness when it tries to take root again. And somewhere along the way, often when you least expect it, you'll realize that the person who hurt you no longer has power over your emotional state. That's when you'll know forgiveness is taking hold.



EXERCISE: THE DEBT INVENTORY (PART 3) - THE RELEASE

This is the final and most important part of the exercise. You've identified the debts. You've seen how you've been trying to collect them. Now it's time to release them.

For each debt on your list, complete this statement out loud:

"I release [ex's name] from the debt of [specific item]. I give this to God to handle as He sees fit."

For example:

- "I release John from the debt of the apology he never gave me. I give this to God to handle as He sees fit."
- "I release Sarah from the debt of the years I gave to our marriage. I give this to God to handle as He sees fit."
- "I release Michael from the debt of justice for his betrayal. I give this to God to handle as He sees fit."

Go through your entire list now. Say each release statement out loud.

1. "I release _____ from the debt of _____. I give this to God to handle as He sees fit."
2. "I release _____ from the debt of _____. I give this to God to handle as He sees fit."
3. "I release _____ from the debt of _____. I give this to God to handle as He sees fit."

(Continue for each debt)

After you've completed this exercise, write the date here: _____

Keep this list somewhere you can access it. You'll probably need to repeat this release process multiple times over the coming weeks and months. That's not failure—that's normal. Forgiveness is choosing again and again to release the debt until one day you realize you're no longer picking it back up.



JOURNALING SPACE: YOUR HONEST CONVERSATION WITH GOD

Now that you've done the work of identifying and releasing the debts, use this space to have a completely honest conversation with God about forgiveness. Don't filter yourself. Don't try to sound spiritual. Just tell Him the truth about where you are.

Some prompts to get you started:

- “God, when I think about forgiving my ex, I feel...”
- “The thing that makes forgiveness feel impossible is...”
- “What I really want is for them to...”
- “I’m afraid that if I forgive them...”
- “The part of this that hurts the most is...”
- “After doing these exercises, I realize...”

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



THIS WEEK'S ACTION STEPS

Choose at least two of these action steps to complete this week:

- ☐ **Pray the "honesty prayer" daily**—Either "God, help me want to forgive" or "God, I want to be free more than I want to hold onto anger." Pray this every day this week, even if you don't feel it.
- ☐ **Repeat the Debt Inventory release statements**—Go back to your list and say the release statements out loud again. Do this at least three times this week.
- ☐ **Identify your triggers**—Notice what situations, conversations, or memories make your anger toward your ex spike. Write them down. Awareness is the first step toward managing them.
- ☐ **Talk to someone you trust**—Share with a counselor, pastor, or trusted friend where you are in the forgiveness process. Ask them to pray for you and check in with you regularly.
- ☐ **Write a letter you'll never send**—Write out everything you wish you could say to your ex about how they hurt you. Get it all out on paper. Then decide whether to keep it, burn it, or throw it away as an act of release.
- ☐ **Memorize one Scripture about forgiveness**—Choose Colossians 3:13: "Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others." When bitterness tries to take root, speak this truth out loud.
- ☐ **Notice the moments you're rehearsing your ex's offenses**—Every time you catch yourself replaying what they did or imagining revenge scenarios, stop and say, "I'm giving this to God." Then intentionally think about something else.

A Final Word: Before You Move On

We have tried to emphasize that forgiveness doesn't usually happen in one sitting. You're not going to read this chapter, do these exercises, and suddenly feel completely free. That's not how it works.

But you can start. You can take the first step. You can choose to be willing, even if you're not able yet.

In our next chapter, we're going to talk about a specific situation that some of our readers are facing: **when the divorce was mostly your fault**. If that's you, the next chapter might be the most important one you read in this entire book. If that's not you, you might be tempted to skip it—**but don't**. Understanding this perspective will help you process your own situation more clearly.

Remember: God isn't asking you to forgive because the person who hurt you deserves it. He's asking you to forgive because He loves you too much to leave you in the prison of bitterness.

You deserve to be free. Let's keep moving toward that freedom together.

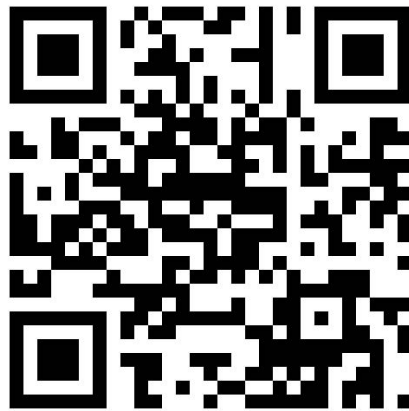
KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Forgiveness means releasing someone from the debt they owe you; it doesn't mean what they did was okay, that you trust them again, or that you have forgotten what happened.
- Unforgiveness keeps you emotionally chained to the person who hurt you. Forgiveness sets YOU free, not them.
- Forgiveness happens in layers. You may need to choose it repeatedly until it finally takes hold.

Ready to Keep Going?

Who Will Love Me Now? is a 21-chapter workbook designed to help you continue the healing process with biblical truth, practical exercises, reflection questions, and guided steps forward.

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