

God Never Said That

"Forgive and Forget"

John 2:23-25 – May 17, 2026

Our Sermon Series

GOD NEVER SAID THAT		
<i>Examining Common Statements That You Will Not Find in the Bible</i>		
Date	Message Title	Bible Text
April 4/5	God Helps Those Who Help Themselves	Ephesians 2:1-9
April 12	God Wants You to Be Happy	2 Corinthians 12:2-10
April 19	God Won't Give You More Than You Can Handle	1 Corinthians 10:13
April 26	Money is The Root of All Evil	1 Timothy 6:6-19
May 3	To Thine Own Self Be True	Luke 9:23-26
May 10	Heaven Needed Another Angel	Romans 12:15
May 17	Forgive and Forget	John 2:23-25
<i>Sermon notes are available in Mandarin and Spanish at the Welcome Desk</i>		

God Never Said That

- Barna survey on forgiveness: 1 in 3 adults believe you cannot truly forgive someone unless you also forget the offense.
- Only 11-20% of Americans have read the entire Bible.
- More than 57% of American adults are "Bible disengaged" (defined as rarely or never interacting with the Bible).
- Hosea 4:6** – *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*
- The Dangers of Forgive and Forget**
 - It Sets a Trap for Re-Victimization**— If you believe you must forget an offense to truly forgive it, you effectively wipe away the data needed to set healthy boundaries. Without the memory of the harm, you are likely to walk back into the same unsafe situation.
 - It Enables the Offender**— "Forgive and forget" often demands that the victim act as if the sin never happened, which removes the natural consequences for the offender and it implies that the relationship must immediately return to its original state. This prevents the offender from seeing the weight of their actions and can hinder their own repentance. It creates an environment where toxic behavior can flourish under the guise of "grace."
 - It Breeds False Guilt and Spiritual Shame**— When a victim is told they must forget, and the memory inevitably resurfaces, they often feel they have failed God or haven't "really" forgiven. This creates a cycle of shame.
 - It Prevents Genuine Healing**— Healing requires processing grief, and you cannot process what you are trying to ignore or forget.
- Acts 17:11** (NIV) – *Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message*

with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

- Grace Fellowship Application:** Let's be Bereans who examine everything with and through Scripture!

What does the Bible say about Forgive and Forget?

1. It is **Almost Right**

- The exact phrase does not appear anywhere in the Bible.
- Hebrews 8:12** (NIV) - For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.
- God is omniscient** (All Knowing)
 - Psalms 147:5** – Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite
 - Revelation 20:12** (NIV) – Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.
- "Remember no more" (לֹא אֶזְכָּר lo ezkhar) is a covenantal legal term, not a statement of divine amnesia.
- It means God will **not hold our sins against us**. He chooses not to bring our sins forward as evidence of condemnation. This is grace, not forgetfulness.
- Pastor Alistair Begg** – *"Forgiveness is a beautiful word, but it is also a legal word. It means the debt has been paid in full, and the Creditor (God) has shredded the invoice. He doesn't forget the debt existed; He simply refuses to collect on it."*
- Corrie Ten Boom** – *"God takes our sins, the past, present, and future, and dumps them into the deepest ocean and puts up a sign that says, 'No Fishing Allowed.'"*
- Charles Spurgeon** – *"He forgets the sin in the sense that He will never punish us for it, never love us the less for it, and never upbraid us with it. It is gone as though it has never been committed."*
- 2 Corinthians 5:17** – *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*
- Romans 8:1** – *Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*
- Psalms 103:12** – *As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*
- Application #1a** – If you haven't received forgiveness from God, do it today by placing your faith in Jesus.

Lord Jesus, I confess that I have sinned and that I cannot save myself. I place my trust in You Jesus and Your death, burial, and resurrection. I invite You into my life. I receive Your FULL FORGIVENESS of my sins, and I receive the free gift of eternal life. Now, make me into a new person. I choose to follow You.

- ☐ Go public with your faith through water baptism. Our next immersion baptism service is on Sunday, June 7th at 12:45pm. Get more info or sign up here: WhatIsGrace.org/Baptisms
- **Application #1b** – If you have accepted Christ, live in the freedom that you're fully forgiven.
 - ☐ Meditate on Psalm 103:8-12 this week and imagine your sins being carried away.
 - ☐ Replace "I can't believe I did that" with "I can't believe God chose to strike that from my record!"
 - ☐ Place a **'No Fishing Allowed'** sticky note on your mirror as a daily reminder to stop digging up the sins God has already cast into the sea of His forgetfulness.

2. Fully Right: Forgive Fully and **Remember Rightly** (John 2:23-25)

- **John 2:23-25** – Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.
- The word entrust (Greek: episteusen) is the same root word as "believe."

Forgiveness	Trust / Reconciliation
Focus: past offense	Focus: present and future risk
Timing: Can be immediate	Timing: Gradual over time
Control: Entirely up to you	Control: Dependent on both parties
Condition: Unconditional	Condition: Trust is earned, requires a behavior change
Cost: Letting go of justice	Cost: Letting go of control
Goal: To release resentment and personal healing	Goal: To build safety and intimacy

- **Dr. Henry Cloud (Boundaries):** "Forgiveness does not mean tolerating the continuation of evil. Boundaries and forgiveness are not opposites, they work together.
- **Lysa TerKeurst:** "Forgiveness is a decision of the heart, but trust is a measurement of the relationship. You can forgive someone and still say 'I am not safe with you.'"
- **Genesis 37-50** Joseph forgave his brothers, but he also tested them to see if there was a truly repentant heart change.
- **Dallas Willard:** "Grace is not opposed to effort. It is opposed to earning. Forgiveness is a grace but applying wisdom to how we trust is never a betrayal of that grace.

Applications# 2

- ☐ Read Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend's book, "Boundaries"
- ☐ Ask the Joseph Question: Have I seen genuine, demonstrated change over time or just an apology in the moment?
- ☐ Talk to someone you trust and work together in setting up good boundaries.
- ☐ Write a release letter— Write out exactly what was done to you and how it hurt. Then at the bottom write: "I release this debt. I will not collect on it." Pray over it, then shred it or burn it as symbolic gesture of giving it to God.

3. Forgiveness is not a feeling, it's a **Command**.

- **Matthew 18:21-22** (NIV) – Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answer, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."
- **Ephesians 4:31-32** – 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.
- **Colossians 3:13** – ...forgive each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
- **C.S. Lewis:** "Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive... To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you."
- **Applications# 3**
 - ☐ Is there someone I need to forgive? Not forget. Not excuse. Not trust blindly. But *release* — choose not to hold the debt.
 - ☐ If the wound is deep, get support. A Christian counselor can help you grieve what was lost and walk toward freedom at the same time. Connect with our Care Ministry WhatIsGrace.org/Care
 - ☐ Pray Corrie Ten Boom's prayer: "Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness."