



CHRISTMAS: THE GIFT OF FORGIVENESS

Christmas is a season of gifts, but one of the greatest gifts God offers us is the life-changing gift of forgiveness. This series invites us to explore that gift through three essential movements: *Receiving* the gift of forgiveness, *Giving* the gift of forgiveness, and ultimately *Living* a life shaped by forgiveness. When we embrace these three dimensions, forgiveness becomes more than an idea, it becomes a transforming power that heals relationships, restores hope, and renews hearts. **And when we open this gift fully, it just might make this Christmas the BEST ONE EVER!** Let's begin the journey together.

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Highland Colony Men's Roundtable

www.MensTable.com

December 18, 2025

Scripture: Colossians 2:13, 14; I John 1:8-10; James 5:16; Matthew 6:14,15; Micah 6:8

Music: I Heard The Bells - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lAhqegKx1oE>

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZtNlZmnEMU>

Videos: Scrooge 1951 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FYV0BJJycs>

Resources: *Forgive: Why Should I and How Can I?* by Dr. Timothy Keller

LIVING THE LIFE OF FORGIVENESS → Forgiveness was never meant to be a one-time decision or a holiday sentiment. It is meant to become the **way we live**—the atmosphere we breathe, the posture of our souls. To live a life of forgiveness is to live as a man who knows who he is, what he's been given, and what he no longer needs to protect.

LIVING FORGIVENESS as a WAY OF LIFE → Living the life of forgiveness means forgiveness has moved from something I *do* to something I *am*. People begin to describe you not as defensive or reactive, but as safe. "He's the most forgiving person I know." That kind of man is not pretending he hasn't been wounded. He's a man who has learned where to take his wounds. Scripture gives us **four anchoring practices** that form a forgiving life.

— **Colossians 2:13–14** → Paul tells us something breathtaking:

All your sins—past, present, future—have already been dealt with. The record of debt. Every accusation. Every failure you still rehearse at 2 a.m. Nailed to the cross. Tim Keller writes that we are more sinful than we ever dared believe, yet more loved and accepted in Christ than we ever dared hope. That truth changes everything. When forgiveness becomes the foundation of your identity, you stop scrambling to prove yourself and stop hiding from your failures. You do not live forgiven by trying harder. You live forgiven by receiving deeper. This is the greatest gift ever given—and you cannot out-sin the cross.

— **1 John 1:8–10**. → Living forgiveness does not mean denying your sin—it means refusing to live in denial. Dan Allender often reminds us that healing begins when we stop managing our image and start telling the truth. The soul cannot be healed from wounds it will not name. When John says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," he's not condemning us—he's inviting us into freedom. When failure goes unacknowledged, it becomes a **secret** to others and a **stone in your boot**. You can walk—but never freely. Daily confession is not about shame. It is about **feeling forgiven**, not just believing it. God awakens the power of forgiveness in us not through self-hatred, but through humble honesty.

— **James 5:16**. → Some chains only break when they're brought into the light. James does not say, "Confess your sins to God and you might feel better." He says, "Confess your sins to one another... that you may be healed." Men finally telling the truth—not the cleaned-up version, but the real one. The worst things they've done. The worst things done to them. And instead of rejection, they find brothers who stay. Dan Allender says that shame thrives in isolation, but it withers in the presence of compassionate witnesses. Healing happens when another man hears your story and says, "You're not alone—and you're not beyond grace." That's living forgiveness in community.

— **Matthew 6:14–15 | Micah 6:8**. → Unforgiveness almost always grows from **superiority**. *I would never do that. I'm not like them.* But humility remembers the truth. As Tim Keller points out, the moment you believe someone's sin disqualifies them from grace, you've forgotten your own story. The man who knows his need for mercy becomes quick to extend it. You cannot stay bitter toward someone you no longer feel above. Micah says we are to **walk humbly with God**—not occasionally visit humility, but walk in it daily. And humility frees us from being so needy, so insecure, so fragile. When your identity is anchored in God's forgiveness, there is a limit to how deeply another person can wound you. They cannot touch your true wealth, your real name, or your eternal security. The more deeply we rejoice in our own forgiveness, the quicker forgiveness flows outward.

CLOSING THOUGHTS → Living the life of forgiveness is not weakness. It is strength rooted in grace. It is the courage to live unguarded in a guarded world. This Christmas, imagine laying down the burdens you've carried for years—not because the pain didn't matter, but because Jesus does. Receive the gift. Give the gift. And now—**live the gift**. It just might make this Christmas the BEST ONE EVER!!!

ACTION: Journal This!

1. Are you forgiven?
2. Do you feel/experience forgiveness daily?
3. To whom can you offer the gift of forgiveness this Christmas?



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Men's Roundtable



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Scripture – The Message

Colossians 2:13, 14 - 13 When you were stuck in your old sin-dead life, you were incapable of responding to God. God brought you alive - right along with Christ! Think of it! All sins forgiven, **14** the slate wiped clean, that old arrest warrant canceled and nailed to Christ's Cross.

I John 1:8-10 - 8 If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. **9** If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. **10** If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

James 5:16 - 16 Make this your common practice: Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you can live together whole and healed. The prayer of a person living right with God is something powerful to be reckoned with.

Matthew 6:14,15 - 14 "In prayer there is a connection between what God does and what you do. You can't get forgiveness from God, for instance, without also forgiving others. **15** If you refuse to do your part, you cut yourself off from God's part.

Micah 6:8 - 8 But he's already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for in men and women. It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in your love, And don't take yourself too seriously - take God seriously.

"Christmas Bells" - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

I heard the bells on Christmas Day Their old, familiar carols play, And wild and sweet The words repeat Of peace on earth, good-will to men! And thought how, as the day had come, The belfries of all Christendom Had rolled along The unbroken song Of peace on earth, good-will to men! Till ringing, singing on its way, The world revolved from night to day,	A voice, a chime, A chant sublime Of peace on earth, good-will to men! Then from each black, accursed mouth The cannon thundered in the South, And with the sound The carols drowned Of peace on earth, good-will to men! It was as if an earthquake rent The hearth-stones of a continent, And made forlorn The households born Of peace on earth, good-will to men!	And in despair I bowed my head; "There is no peace on earth," I said; "For hate is strong, And mocks the song Of peace on earth, good-will to men!" Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep; The Wrong shall fail, The Right prevail, With peace on earth, good-will to men."
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