

# MY BAD

## FORGIVENESS



**BIG IDEA:** Do you find it difficult to believe that you have *total* forgiveness in Jesus Christ for your sins? You may believe it intellectually, but how about *deep* within your heart?

God's Word tells us that believers have been set free—free from sin, free from the Law, free from bondage of guilt that sin and the Law bring—through Jesus Christ, and His death on the cross. If you're a Christian, He has forgiven you. You simply need to receive His forgiveness and believe His promise. And it is quite a promise:

*For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:11, 12).*

That's the forgiveness that God offers. It became yours the moment you believed in Christ as your Savior.

In this study we'll explore how Jesus provides forgiveness from sin and enables us to live abundantly.



**DESIRED LIFE CHANGE:** As a result of this study, your group should begin to understand how God's cleansing from sin opens them to the abundant, fulfilling life to which Jesus has called them.



**AUDIENCE:** This lesson is designed for students who: 1) seek to better understand the basis of forgiveness for their sins, and 2) desire to change from living a defeated, fruitless life, to experiencing the full and abundant life that God has promised through Jesus Christ.



**LEADER'S PREPARATION:** Become familiar with the Luke 24 passage and the Colossians 2 passage. Also, it would be helpful to read through the Holy Spirit booklet and the Transferable Concept *How You Can Experience God's Love and Forgiveness* to gain additional insight about God's forgiveness. NOTE: Page two of the student piece may require more preparation than usual.



### AT A GLANCE

As your group interacts in this study, they will observe . . .

**This is my WORLD:** I am often confused about how to deal with sin in my life and how to experience the forgiveness God offers me.

**This is my NEED:** I need to believe what God says is the basis for my forgiveness and learn how I can continually experience His forgiveness.

**This is my ANSWER:** Because Jesus canceled the debt of sin that I owe, I will believe it and live like it.

**This is the DIFFERENCE:** Basing my forgiveness on what Jesus has done for me allows me to experience victory over sin and frees me up from living under guilt and shame.

**This is what I'll DO:** I will apply the principles of moment-by-moment confession of my sin.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION – WHY IS THIS STUDY IMPORTANT?



Many of your students do not have a meaningful relationship with God. One reason may be that they feel defeated by the power and effects of sin in their lives. Often, these feelings of defeat are rooted in a lack of understanding about the nature of God's forgiveness toward them, or how they can apply that truth to their daily lives. As a result, many students struggle with feelings of defeat, guilt, or shame when it comes to dealing with sin in their lives.

Fortunately, God has provided a means for us to experience His forgiveness and live an abundant and fulfilling life. This lesson is designed to assist your group in understanding and applying these truths: By faith you can claim as true what Jesus Christ has said and done for you. By faith you can view yourself as God views you, as His child—loved, forgiven and cleansed. By faith you can confess your sins and repent. And by faith you can accept God's forgiveness and cleansing.

1 **STATE:** "Today we want to look at God's forgiveness. Let's explore two stories about forgiveness."

2 **READ:** Both stories aloud.

3 **READ & ASK**

4 **STATE:** "Let's look specifically at how Corrie responded."

Read aloud to group: "I know from the Bible that hatred means murder in God's eyes. I also know from the Bible what to do with hatred. When we confess our sins, when we repent and ask for forgiveness, then the blood of Jesus will cleanse us of all our sins.

"The Lord cleansed my heart with his blood. A heart cleansed by the blood of Jesus is filled with the Holy Spirit. And the fruit of the Spirit is love, love even for my enemies" (ibid).

5 **ASK:** "What would you have to know in order to forgive as Corrie did? List your responses." Discuss as a group.

6 **STATE:** "Corrie needed to know three things." Read aloud to group:

Matthew 5:21-24


Was she really so different than this man? The hatred in her heart suggested otherwise. She needed to know that it was not just this man who was guilty, **she also needed forgiveness.**

Matthew 5:43

Jesus' high call in her life was to love the unlovable, her enemy. How was this possible? **She needed to respond to her enemies as Christ did to His.**

1 Corinthians 13:1-13

If these are the qualities of love, and we know that God loves us perfectly, then how did God love Corrie? In order to love, **she needed to know the depth of God's love and forgiveness for her.**


VERSION 2.1

## MY BAD

### HOLLAND—WWII

Once there came a man to me and said, "Will you save my wife? She has been arrested for trying to help Jewish people. And now she is in the police station. And there is one policeman who will run the risk to set her free if we pay him six hundred guilders. But I have no money."

I said, "Don't worry about the money. Let's see... I have two hundred guilders, come back in an hour." And in that hour I asked all my friends to give money in order to save the life of this good woman. When the man came back I gave him six hundred guilders.

That man was a Ques-ling, a betrayer. His wife was not at all in prison. But the Gestapo, the police of the enemy, had said, "Find out if Corrie ten Boom saves Jewish people." Five minutes after I gave him the money, my house was surrounded by German soldiers. My family and I were all taken to the concentration camp.

Ten days after arriving in the camp my 84-year-old father died. Ten months later my sister, who I loved with all my heart, also died. My brother was released, but soon died from illness. Whenever I thought of that man, that betrayer, hatred would fill my heart.

—Corrie ten Boom, "The Greatest of These Is Love," Focus on the Family, 1992 (audio cassette).

### L.A.—SUMMER OF '92

It was a hot summer afternoon. Some would say it was a matter of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The city of Los Angeles was literally in flames when a truck driver drove his truck through the intersection of Normandie and Florence avenues in south central Los Angeles. As the driver approached the intersection, a brick was thrown into his windshield. He applied his brakes, and five men pulled him from the truck and onto the street.

In the next few minutes, the men kicked him, punched him, and struck him in the head with a fire extinguisher. In perhaps the most graphic display of brutality, one of the attackers broke a cinder block on the driver's head, danced around him, and then stood in mock conquest with one foot on his neck. For an hour Reginald Denny would lie there—unconscious in a pool of blood, until people who lived near the intersection came to his rescue after watching the entire incident as it was filmed from a television news helicopter.

One year later, after recovery from roughly 100 skull fractures, three major operations, blood clots on the brain, and a struggle with permanent brain damage, Reginald Denny stated at this assailants' trial for attempted murder his belief that the men did not need to go to prison for their crime. And in a touching moment, Denny demonstrated his forgiveness by embracing the mothers of the three defendants.

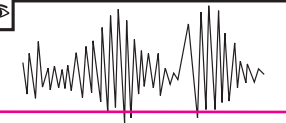
Corrie ten Boom was a Dutch Christian who survived the Holocaust and wrote about her experiences in her book, *The Hiding Place*.

### DISCUSS

Put yourself in each person's shoes.

Corrie: How would you have felt toward your betrayer? How long would you hold these feelings?	Reginald: How would you have felt toward your attackers? Share some of your inner reactions or responses.
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### CORRIE'S RESPONSE




### NEED TO KNOW

MY LIST	CORRIE'S LIST

### THE REST OF THE STORY

After the war, the man who betrayed Corrie and her family was arrested and placed on trial for his part in the death of many Dutch people in Nazi concentration camps. He was soon convicted and sentenced to death by hanging.

Corrie learned of this man's fate and sent a letter explaining that she, through Christ's love, had found the ability to forgive him. She also sent a Bible with God's plan of salvation underlined. The day before he was executed, the man wrote to Corrie to explain how her forgiveness had freed him up to accept Christ's love. The next day, through God's grace and Corrie's manifestation of that grace, he entered heaven.



**TOOLBOX**

- THINK
- OBSERVE
- CLOSE-UP
- WRITE
- DISCUSS
- FEELINGS
- BRAINSTORM
- REFERENCE
- PASSAGE
- ARTICLE
- BIG IDEA
- CROSSROAD

7 **STATE:** "Finally, let's hear the rest of the story."  
**READ**

8 **TRANSITION:** "What is God's forgiveness like? Specifically, how did Jesus demonstrate it?"

1 **STATE:** "Let's look at how Jesus demonstrates forgiveness."

2 **READ**  
**Options for discussing Luke 22:47-23:34.**

1. Show the segment of the *JESUS* video portraying the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Have each group member list the offenses against Christ as they are watching the tape.
2. Play an audio tape of the Luke passage instructing members to take notes and list offenses against Christ while listening to the tape.
3. After one of the more outgoing group members reads the passage out loud (this should take about five minutes), have members make their lists.
4. If each group member has a Bible, have them read the passage silently, making their own list of the offenses against Christ.

3 **ASK:** "In these verses, what did Jesus forgive? Make a list."

- betrayal
- desertion
- beating
- mocking
- wrongful accusations

Optional: You may have your group look at these passages or have them list other ways Jesus demonstrated forgiveness.

**JUDAS**

As one of Jesus' twelve disciples, Judas was appointed to the role of treasurer and embezzled money from the funds in his care. Though his character was known to Jesus (John 6:70), Judas enjoyed fellowship with Jesus for three years. Judas accepted 30 pieces of silver as payment for turning Jesus over to the chief priests, yet Jesus called him friend as Judas betrayed him in the garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:50). After hearing that Jesus had been condemned to death, Judas was "filled with remorse," attempted to return the silver pieces to the chief priests, and then committed suicide.

**PETER**

Peter was perhaps the most prominent of Jesus' twelve disciples. He was typically the most outspoken of "the twelve" and often spoke on the behalf of the rest of the apostles. He was counted among Christ's "inner circle" of disciples—along with James and John—and his name appears first in each list of the apostles found in the New Testament. Though he was a staunch defender of Jesus (Matthew 26:35; John 18:10), Peter denied that he knew Christ three times on the evening following his leader's arrest. Peter wept bitterly in shame when he recalled that Jesus had foretold that he would deny Him.

**PILATE**

Pontius Pilate was the Roman procurator (or governor) of Judea from A.D. 26 to 36. He was very interested in Jesus' claims to deity but bowed to pressure from the multitudes and pronounced Jesus' sentence of death by crucifixion.

**CRUCIFIXION**

This primarily Roman mode of execution involved nailing or binding a person to a cross. Crucifixion caused death by asphyxiation and was the ultimate act of public humiliation.

**Jesus Demonstrates Forgiveness**

**LUKE 22:47-23:34**

List (from these verses) the offenses Jesus forgave.

**OTHER EXAMPLES OF GOD'S FORGIVENESS**

- Woman caught in adultery. —John 8
- David commits adultery and murder. —2 Samuel 11 and 12; see also Psalms 32 and 51
- Paul's persecution of Christians. —Acts 8 and 9

Share & discuss.

**REFLECT**

Can you relate to any of the people on this page? In what ways?

How has Jesus forgiven me?

4 **ASK**

5 Just for them.

**1 ASK & DISCUSS**

**2 STATE:** "Let's read Paul's description of what God has done for us."

**THOUGHT**

Do you think you could ever do something too horrible for God to forgive?

**COLOSSIANS 2:13-15**

When you were spiritually dead because of your sins and because you were not free from the power of your sinful self, God made you alive with Christ, and he forgave all our sins. He canceled the debt, which listed all the rules we failed to follow. He took away that record with its rules and nailed it to the cross. God stripped the spiritual rulers and powers of their authority. With the cross, He won the victory and showed the world that they were powerless.

New Century Version of the Bible  
(Dallas: Word Publishing, 1987, 1988, 1991)

**LIST**

According to Colossians 2:13-15, what has Jesus done for you?

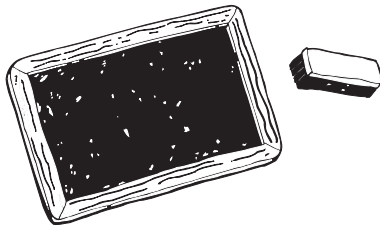
- God made you alive.
- God forgave.
- He canceled the debt.
- He took away the record.
- God stripped the spiritual rules.
- He won the victory.
- He showed the world.

**CANCELED THE DEBT**

Also: "written code" (NIV) or "certificate of debt" (NASB)

This written code, the Law, was like a handwritten "certificate of debt" (NASB). Since people cannot keep the Law, it is like a bill of indebtedness. So people, unable to pay the debt, are criminals. But Jesus took . . . away this charge, this certificate of indebtedness, by His death. It is as if He were nailing it to the cross with Him, showing He paid the debt. He wiped the slate clean.

—John Walvoord and Roy Zuck,  
The Bible Knowledge Commentary  
(Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1983)



**DISCUSS**

Think of a situation in your teenage years where you really "blew it," but a close friend, parent, teacher, etc., forgave you and loved you unconditionally. Describe the situation and how their response made you feel.

How can I continually experience God's forgiveness?

**3 ASK SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS:**

Who is doing the work?  
Who is active?  
Who is doing the saving?  
Who is the one with the strength?

**4 STATE:** "Here's what Paul meant by the phrase 'canceled the debt.'"

**5 READ & DISCUSS**

**6 TRANSITION:** Read.

**TRANSITION STATEMENT:** “We’ve just explored the basis for our forgiveness. Now let’s see how we can practically apply this truth to our daily lives.”

**1 READ**

**2 ASK**

**DISCUSS**

What does it mean to confess?

**APPLICATIONS**

**CONFESS**

*Homologeō*, lit., to speak the same thing; to assent, accord, agree with; denotes either (a) to confess, declare, admit, or (b) to confess by way of admitting oneself guilty of what one is accused of, the result of inward conviction.

—W.E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1952, 1980)

**REPENTANCE**

*Metanoia* can be said to denote that inward change of mind, affections, convictions, and commitment, rooted in the fear of God and sorrow for offenses committed against Him, which, when accompanied by faith in Jesus Christ, results in an outward turning from sin to God and His service in all of life.

—Karl G. Kromminga, *Baker’s Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1960)

**FOR FURTHER STUDY**

Psalms 32, 51, 103

Read the stories on page 2 under “Other Examples.”

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture references are taken from the *New International Version*, ©1973, 1978, 1984 by the International Bible Society. Published by Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

**3 FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS:**

In confession:

- What do you talk about?
- To whom do you confess?
- How often should you confess?
- What things should you confess?

REFERENCE:

Refer to this box to clarify confession and repentance.

- 4 ASK:** “What does it mean to repent? What does it involve?”

**BIG IDEA:** It is crucial at this point to help your group see the difference between **regret** (simply feeling sorry for their sin) and true **repentance** (the inward change that results in the outward change regarding sin).

- 5 ASK:** “What steps can you take to apply God’s forgiveness to your life?”

- 1) **Make a sin list.** (See LEADER’S RESOURCE on the next page for more information on this process.)
- 2) **Moment-by-moment confession.** Keep short accounts with God. Confess sin the moment God’s Holy Spirit reveals it to you. Don’t allow unconfessed sin to short-circuit the flow of God’s power in your life.
- 3) **Make restitution.** You cannot maintain a clear conscience before God if you still have a guilty conscience before people. If you have truly wronged another person, confessing it and making restitution when necessary will release the guilt.
- 4) **Memorize 1 John 1:9.** Memorize it, believe it and live it.



**BOOKS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

*How You Can Experience God's Love and Forgiveness* – Bill Bright (NewLife Publications)

*Free to Forgive* – Frank Minirth, Paul Meier (Thomas Nelson)

*Freedom of Forgiveness* – David Augsberger (Moody)

*Forgive and Forget* – Louis Smedes (HarperCollins)



**TOPIC CONNECTIONS**

Related *InterACTA* small group studies: *Extreme Love; Walk This Way; Under The Influence.*



**ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE**

**PASSAGES:** The following passages deal with sin, God's forgiveness, and related issues:

- John 8
- Hebrews 10
- 2 Samuel 11,12
- Psalms 32, 51, 103
- Acts 8,9
- Matthew 6, 18
- Romans 6, 7, 8
- 1 John 1

**MAKING A SIN LIST**

The following is a simple process that has helped thousands of Christians experience God's forgiveness.

- 1) **List your sins.** Begin by asking God to reveal every sin in your life and any area that has displeased Him. Take pencil and paper and list every sin He brings to mind. As you write, confess each of them to God.
- 2) **Write God's promise across the list.** After you have written the sins God reveals to you, write God's promise of forgiveness from 1 John 1:9 across the list.
- 3) **Destroy the list.** Accept His forgiveness by faith, then destroy the list as an illustration of the forgiveness God has granted you.
- 4) **Make restitution.** You may need to apologize to someone or ask someone to forgive you. Experiencing forgiveness often involves making restitution.

**O V E R V I E W O F M E E T I N G T I M E**



**Planning your group session**

**Allocating your time**

	INTERACTION AS A GROUP	INTERACTION WITH THE STUDY & WORD	INTERACTION WITH GOD	UPCOMING INFORMATION	OTHER IDEAS
	Ice breaker? Refreshments?	Provided. Add personal story?	Worship / Praise / Prayer time?	Next meeting? Special event?	Music / Video?
	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.	_____ min.

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