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CHRISTMAS: THE GIFT OF FORGIVENESS

Christmas is a season filled with gifts—gifts wrapped in paper, tied with bows, placed under trees. But there is one gift God offers that outshines every package we could ever receive: the life-changing gift of forgiveness. This series invites us into a journey with three movements: Receiving the gift of forgiveness, Giving the gift of forgiveness, and Living a life shaped by forgiveness. When we embrace all three, forgiveness becomes a transforming power that heals relationships, restores hope, and renews hearts. And when we open this gift fully, it may just make this Christmas the BEST ONE EVER.

LIVING FORGIVENESS as a WAY OF LIFE □ Living the life of forgiveness means forgiveness has moved from something I *do* to something I *am*. Scripture gives us **four anchoring practices** that form a forgiving life.

1. _____ - **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. Nailed to the cross. 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.*
2. _____ - **1 John 1:8–10**. □ Living forgiveness does not mean denying your sin—it means refusing to live in denial. 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.
3. _____ - **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. That's living forgiveness in community.
4. _____ - **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. Micah says we are to **walk humbly with God**—not occasionally visit humility but walk in its daily.



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, Receive the gift. Give the gift. And now—**live the gift**. It just might make this Christmas the **BEST ONE EVER!!!**