A SHORT BIBLE STUDY

# Choosing Forgiveness and Resolving Conflict

*Living It Out · Book 3*



*Responding to wrong with truth and grace*

Andrew Dominguez

Trinfinity Enterprises

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# A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Book

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this book direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

## Introduction

A wrong can become the center of a relationship when every conversation returns to what one person owes the other. Scripture calls us toward forgiveness, and it also gives direction for addressing sin. I want to hold those responsibilities together. Forgiveness should lead me away from revenge, while truth should keep me from pretending that the wrong never mattered.

My wife and I have been married 36 years, and I have had plenty of chances to give and ask for forgiveness. My biggest lesson came when I had made choices that hurt my marriage and the people closest to me, and I had to face the damage honestly. Receiving grace I did not deserve changed how I treat people when conflict hits. I wrote this book for anyone carrying an old grudge or trying to rebuild trust.

## 1 The account I keep

First Corinthians 13:4-8 (SLB) describes love through both what it does and what it refuses to do. It "is patient, is kind," it "does not count the evil," and it "does not rejoice over unrighteousness." That hits a habit most of us know: keeping a grudge handy so I can pull it out whenever I want the upper hand.

It is possible to remember an event because it helps me act wisely. It is also possible to preserve the event as a weapon. The difference is in what I am doing with it. Am I seeking truth, repair, and appropriate accountability, or am I waiting for an opportunity to make the person pay again?

Forgiveness is not a command to destroy accurate records, deny harm, or expose someone to repeated abuse. A necessary boundary can exist alongside a refusal to seek revenge. Trust may need to be rebuilt through truthful conduct over time. Making peace takes more than one person saying the issue is finished.

I want to examine the account I carry in my heart. If my sense of importance depends on another person's failure, I have allowed the grievance to shape more than the relationship. It is shaping me. The Lord calls me toward a different response, one grounded in the mercy I have received from Him.

## 2 Remembering the mercy I need

> *bearing with one another and forgiving each other, if anyone has a complaint against anyone; just as Christ also forgave you, so also you.*
> **Colossians 3:13 (SLB)**

Colossians 3:13 (SLB) places forgiveness in the everyday life of believers. Complaints and failures will occur in a community of imperfect people. The instruction is to bear with one another and forgive, "just as Christ also forgave you." The standard begins with His grace.

That does not make every offense small. Some wrongs are serious, and some consequences remain even after forgiveness is expressed. God's mercy should never become a phrase used to pressure an injured person into silence. The person who caused

harm still needs to tell the truth and accept responsibility.

I also want to be careful when speaking about God forgetting sin. Psalm 103:12 (SLB) says, "He has removed our transgressions far from us." That is a promise about our sin before God. It does not mean that what people do no longer matters. Revelation 20:11-15 (SLB) describes judgment according to the deeds of those who died without Christ. God's forgiveness for those in Christ and His judgment of those without Him are both true, and I need to keep both in view.

Remembering the mercy I need changes the spirit in which I approach another person. I can take the wrong seriously without pretending I stand above the need for grace. The goal is to show the Lord's character in a hard situation, even in the parts where my pride would rather stay in charge.

In my lowest season, I had made choices that hurt my marriage and the people closest to me. My pastor did not turn me away. He listened, and he helped me back toward God. When you know how much you have been forgiven, it gets much harder to hold someone else by the throat (Matthew 18:33). Remembering the mercy we received is the cure for a hard heart.

## 3 Going to the person

> *And if your brother sins against you, go and reprove him between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.*
> **Matthew 18:15 (SLB)**

Matthew 18:15 (SLB) begins with a private approach when a brother sins. In other words, I talk to the person first, not to everyone else about the person. A calm, face-to-face talk gives the other person a chance to hear me out without being cornered in front of others.

The wider passage provides further steps when the person does not listen, including witnesses and the church. Those steps belong to the passage's setting. I should not turn them into a rigid policy for every workplace or family disagreement. The practical principle of addressing the actual person still helps in many ordinary conflicts.

I can prepare by separating what I observed from what I assumed. Describe the action, explain its effect, and allow a response. Listening does not mean I must abandon a clear concern. It gives me a better chance of understanding the full situation before deciding what repair is needed.

Some situations require protection, reporting, or help from an appropriate authority rather than an isolated private meeting. A biblical call to restoration should not be used to conceal serious harm. Wise assistance can help keep the response truthful and responsible.

Seeking that assistance is different from turning a grievance into gossip.

## 4 Repair that can be seen

> *And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.*
>
> **Ephesians 4:32 (SLB)**

When I have done wrong, I should take responsibility without waiting for the other person to present a perfect case. A clear apology names the conduct and acknowledges its effect. If something can be restored, replaced, or corrected, the response should include that action.

When I have been wronged, I may need time to work through anger and grief. I can bring that process before the Lord without pretending the pain has disappeared. Releasing revenge does not require an instant feeling of warmth. It does require a growing willingness to stop making repayment the purpose of the relationship.

Ephesians 4:32 (SLB) calls believers to kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness in light of what God has done in Christ. That plays out every day in a home, a church, or a friendship. The person beside me should not have to be flawless before I am willing to respond with grace.

I want conflict to become an occasion for truth and growth rather than another reason for division. That will require humility from the person who speaks and

the person who listens. I cannot control both responses. I can take responsibility for my own words, seek appropriate help, and refuse to make revenge my task.

Saying "I am sorry" takes two seconds. Rebuilding trust takes steady follow-through you can see. Since May 29, 2020, I have learned that repentance shows up in changed habits, honest accountability and keeping your word day after day. Part of my own 12-step work was making amends, including telling a friend of more than 40 years the truth. Even then, doing right today does not mean everyone has forgiven you. You give that to God and do not dwell on what others think. People do not need bigger promises. They need actions they can see (Luke 3:8).

# Choosing Forgiveness and Resolving Conflict

✦ ✦ ✦

Forgiveness does not mean pretending the wrong never happened. This book walks through letting go of the account I keep, remembering the mercy I need, going to the person directly, and making a repair that can be seen.

*Bearing with one another and forgiving each other, if anyone has a complaint against anyone; just as Christ also forgave you, so also you.*

**Colossians 3:13 (SLB)**

*Book 3 of 10 in the collection Living It Out*

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