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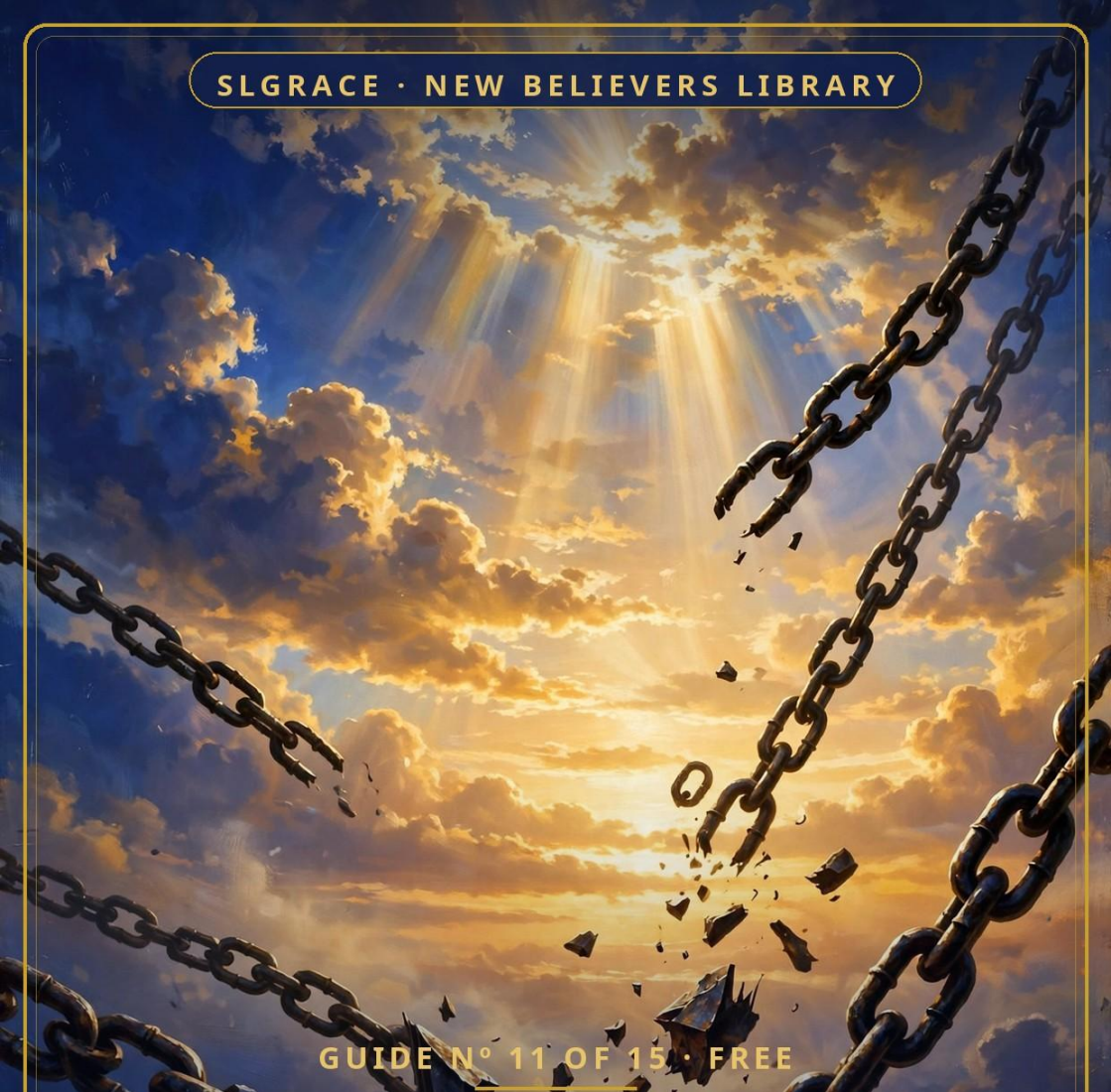

GUIDE Nº 11 OF 15 · FREE

Forgiven and Free

Leaving guilt and the past behind — for good

— PSALM 103:12 (KJV)

A free guide for new believers · slgrace.com

A letter to you, dear friend

Dear friend, perhaps the heaviest chain on many new believers is not a present sin but a past one. You have believed, you have confessed, you have even been told you are forgiven — yet the memories return: the years wasted, the people hurt, the secret chapters nobody knows. At night the accuser replays the film and whispers, 'Someone like you? Forgiven? Never.' This guide was written for that exact voice, and against it. We will let God's own words about your past have the final say.

You will see how completely God forgives — east from west, depths of the sea, remembered no more — why your feelings of guilt sometimes lag behind God's fact of forgiveness, and the practical steps to walk free: confession done properly, restitution where possible, forgiving yourself, and forgiving others. Freedom is not a luxury for advanced Christians. It is the birthright of every child of God, starting today.

How completely God forgives: three pictures

God does not describe His forgiveness in small words. In Psalm 103 He measures it in geography: 'As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.' Travel east and you will never meet west — east and west never touch; that is the distance God has put between you and your forgiven sins. In Micah, He changes the picture to the ocean: He casts our sins 'into the depths of the sea.' What sinks in the deep sea is not retrieved for display. In Isaiah, He speaks the most astonishing words of all: 'I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.' God — who forgets nothing by accident — chooses, by covenant, not to remember your confessed sins against you.

Sit with those three pictures until they sink in. Your forgiven past is not stored in heaven's archive for future embarrassment. It is

removed, drowned, blotted out. When the accuser brings up a confessed sin, he is bringing up something God Himself has chosen not to remember. You are allowed — commanded, almost — to agree with God against the accusation.

Notice also the ground of this forgiveness: 'for mine own sake' — for God's sake, because of who He is and what Jesus did — not because your sin was small or your sorrow was impressive. That means no sin of yours is 'too big' for a forgiveness that rests on Christ's blood rather than on the size of your record.

> *"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."*
> **— Isaiah 43:25 (KJV)**

Guilt feelings and God's facts

Distinguish two things that share one name. True guilt is a legal fact: before God, the unrepentant sinner stands guilty — and that fact is exactly what Christ's blood removes for the believer. Guilt feelings are emotions: the ache, the flush of shame, the heaviness that can linger long after the fact has been dealt with, like pain in a healed limb during rain. Feelings are real, but they are reporters, not judges — and sometimes they report old news. Your freedom grows as you learn to answer feelings with facts: 'I feel condemned — but God says there is no condemnation. I will believe the Judge over my mood.'

Some guilt feelings also have honest work to do: they may point to a sin not yet confessed, an apology not yet made, a restitution not yet attempted. Do not suppress such promptings — obey them (the next section shows how), and watch the feelings quieten once the obedience is done. What remains after confession and repair is no longer the Holy Spirit's conviction; it is the echo of an emptied prison. Echoes fade with time, truth and thanksgiving.

Fill the silence the accuser leaves. Speak God's forgiveness verses aloud daily for a season — the closing list of this guide is made for that. Sing hymns of the blood and the cross. Tell your testimony, including the words 'and He forgiven me completely' — hearing your own mouth agree with heaven rewires a guilty heart faster than silent hoping.

> *"He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."*
> **— Micah 7:19 (KJV)**

Settling the past properly: confession and restitution

Freedom loves a clean conscience, and a clean conscience sometimes requires practical steps. First, confession to God — specific, complete, unhurried. Bring the whole past into the light in prayer, category by category if needed: things done, words spoken, things left undone, secret sins. Nothing you name will shock Him, and nothing left unnamed will heal properly. Receive His forgiveness by faith at the end of that prayer, and thank Him aloud.

Second, where your past wronged people and repair is possible and safe, make restitution: apologise sincerely, return or repay what was taken, correct lies you spread, reconcile where the other party is willing. Zacchaeus, the cheating tax collector, repaid fourfold — and Jesus called that salvation's fruit. Some situations need wisdom: where contact would harm or endanger, or the person is unreachable or deceased, bring the matter to God and to a trusted pastor, do what can be done (a letter unsent but written, a repayment to the family or to charity), and then rest the case with God. Do not let an impossible restitution become a permanent prison; God accepts the willing heart and the possible deed.

Third, forgive yourself. This surprises many: they accept God's forgiveness in theory yet keep themselves on probation for years. Hear it plainly — you do not have a higher standard than God. If the Judge of all the earth has acquitted you for Christ's sake, your self-condemnation is not humility; it is a refusal of the verdict. Lay down the whip. The hands that should hold it were pierced instead.

> *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*
> **— 1 John 1:9 (KJV)**

Do this:

1. Set aside one unhurried hour for a full confession prayer this week.
2. List any restitution or apology still possible; do the first one within seven days.
3. Each morning for two weeks, say aloud: 'God has forgiven me fully. So do I.'

Forgiving those who hurt you

Your freedom has a second door: forgiving others. Many carry into the Christian life deep wounds — betrayal, abuse, abandonment, theft, slander. Jesus ties our own experience of freedom tightly to our willingness to forgive: 'Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.' Unforgiveness is a chain whose other end is in your own hand; the person who hurt you may never know or care, while bitterness poisons your prayer, your health and your joy daily. Forgiving them is not saying it did not matter. It is handing the case to God, the righteous Judge, and walking out of the courtroom free.

Forgiveness is first a decision, then a process. Decide before God: 'I release them. I will not revenge; I leave vengeance to God.' Then, when the memory returns with fresh pain — and it will, for a while — renew the decision: 'I have forgiven. Lord, heal the memory.'

Feelings follow decisions the way carriages follow a horse; give them time. For deep wounds, walk this road with a pastor or mature believer; some healing needs company, prayer and time, and there is no shame in that.

Forgiveness does not always mean restored trust or renewed closeness — wisdom may keep distance from an unrepentant, unsafe person. It means the debt is cancelled in your heart and the vengeance surrendered to God. Do that, and you will discover the miracle every forgiver reports: the prisoner set free was yourself.

> *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*
> **— Ephesians 4:32 (KJV)**

Living free: the past loses its microphone

Freedom, once received, is defended daily. Keep short accounts with God: confess quickly, daily, before small guilts pile into a mountain. Keep your testimony current — notice and name what God is doing NOW, so your story is not only about what you escaped but about where you are going. The past loves a vacuum; a life full of present obedience and future hope leaves it no room to preach.

Serve others from your story. The very chapters you once hid will become, in God's hands, medicine for people still trapped in them. No one ministers to the bound like the formerly bound who are now free. Do not be surprised when God begins sending you people with your old chains; your scars, healed, will be your credentials.

Finally, look at yourself the way heaven does: a new creature, washed, adopted, beloved, free. When the old film starts playing, change the channel with a verse and a song of thanks. You are forgiven — not partially, not probationally, not temporarily. Forgiven and free. Live like it, starting this morning.

> *“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”*
> **— John 8:36 (KJV)**

A PRAYER OF RELEASE — FOR MY PAST, AND FOR THOSE WHO HURT ME

Father, I bring You my whole past — every sin, every shame — and I lay it at the cross of Jesus. Your Word says You have removed my sins as far as the east is from the west, and I believe You. I receive Your complete forgiveness, and I forgive myself. I also release those who hurt me; I hand their case to You and I walk free. Fill my heart with Your present love and my mouth with thanksgiving. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Verses to hold on to

Keep these verses near you. Read one each morning. Say it aloud. God’s Word will hold you on days when feelings are weak.

> *“As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.”*
> **— Psalm 103:12 (KJV)**

> *“I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.”*
> **— Isaiah 43:25 (KJV)**

> *“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”*
> **— Isaiah 1:18 (KJV)**

> *“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.”*
> **— Romans 8:1 (KJV)**

You are not walking alone

Dear friend, you have finished this guide — well done. Keep it near your Bible and return to it whenever you need it. Growth is day by day, and your Father is patient, present and proud of every honest step you take toward Him.

If you would like someone to pray with you, answer your questions, or walk with you in these first steps, our free Salvation Follow-Up team would be honoured to hear from you. Visit slgrace.com and open the chat — ask for the "Salvation Follow-Up" desk. It is completely free, and you will be received with love.

The other free guides in this series

1. You Are a New Creature — free from the Salvation Follow-Up Desk at slgrace.com

2. First Steps With Jesus — free from the Salvation Follow-Up Desk at slgrace.com

3. How to Pray — free from the Salvation Follow-Up Desk at slgrace.com

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May the Lord bless you and keep you, make His face shine upon you, and give you peace — today and all your days. (Numbers 6:24-26)