

FROM **DREAM** TO **DESTINY**
FULFILLING GOD'S PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE

The Pardon Test

Focus God has a dream and a destiny for every person, but we must pass some character tests before we can fulfill our destiny. Great character supports great destiny.

Open Describe what “the perfect day” would be like in your home.

Read Can we truly forgive someone who has done us great wrong, even if they never acknowledge it or repent? This is The Pardon Test. In Genesis 50:15–21, Joseph passed this test when he chose to pardon his brothers for selling him into slavery even though they never repented for it.

The three keys to passing the Pardon Test are to *release*, to *receive* and to *believe*. To pardon means to fully release someone. Romans 12:19 tells us that it's never right for us to try to avenge ourselves. Only God can bring justice to an unjust situation because He's the only one qualified to do it. When we don't release someone, we spend our lives trying to prove something (that we were wronged) rather than to please Someone. We're to forgive others without condition.

Our ability to *extend* forgiveness is directly dependent on our ability to *receive* forgiveness. If we feel that we're paying for our wrong or that we have to earn forgiveness from God, we'll make others pay and earn our forgiveness. The Bible says that through Jesus we have been forgiven completely. We have been made righteous. Therefore, because we have believed and received God's forgiveness fully and freely, we can forgive others.

Talk

1. In your own words, describe what it means to pardon, or forgive, someone.
2. As we stated earlier, when we will not forgive, “we will live to *prove something* rather than to please Someone.” Describe a time (in general) when you have observed someone change the course of their life by refusing to release another person. How did this statement prove to be true?
3. We don’t forgive someone for being right. That’s why it can be so difficult to forgive. What, in particular, do you find especially difficult to forgive (i.e., betrayal)?
4. What is wrong with requiring an apology or confession before being willing to forgive someone (Romans 12:19, Leviticus 19:18)?
5. How are receiving forgiveness from God and extending pardon to others related?
6. The Bible says that because of His holiness, God can’t even look upon wickedness. It also says that His eyes are always on the righteous. We were all born sinful. Why can God keep His eyes on us now? (See Psalm 103:12, Isaiah 53:6 and 2 Corinthians 5:21)
7. When we refuse to forgive, we fail the Pardon Test. What are we essentially communicating to God when we refuse to forgive others?

Live

In groups of two or three, take a few minutes to tell God how much you have needed Him to pardon you, and thank Him that He has forgiven you fully and freely.

Now, in response to the forgiveness God has given you, tell Him that you choose to forgive _____. (Name the relationship or circumstance that He brings to mind. Do not specifically name the person or circumstance, but keep it general. You can pray about it specifically in private.) Ask Him to help you release it fully and freely, leaving justice to Him in this relationship or situation.

Pray

In addition to prayerfully thanking God for His pardon and choosing to extend that towards others, pray for any specific needs represented in the group.