

THE BAIT OF SATAN DEVOTIONAL STUDY GUIDE

Remember that when we lose our life for the sake of Jesus, we will find His life. Learn to fix your focus on the end result, not the struggle. (See 1 Peter 4:12-13.)

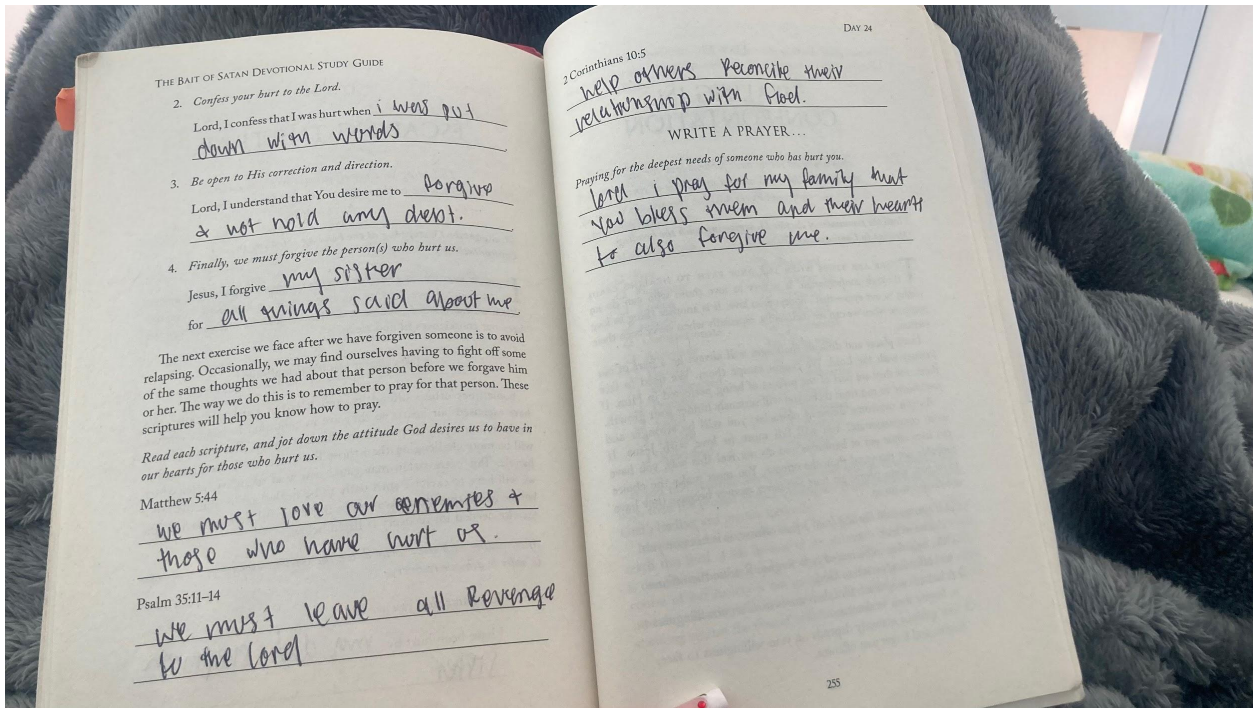
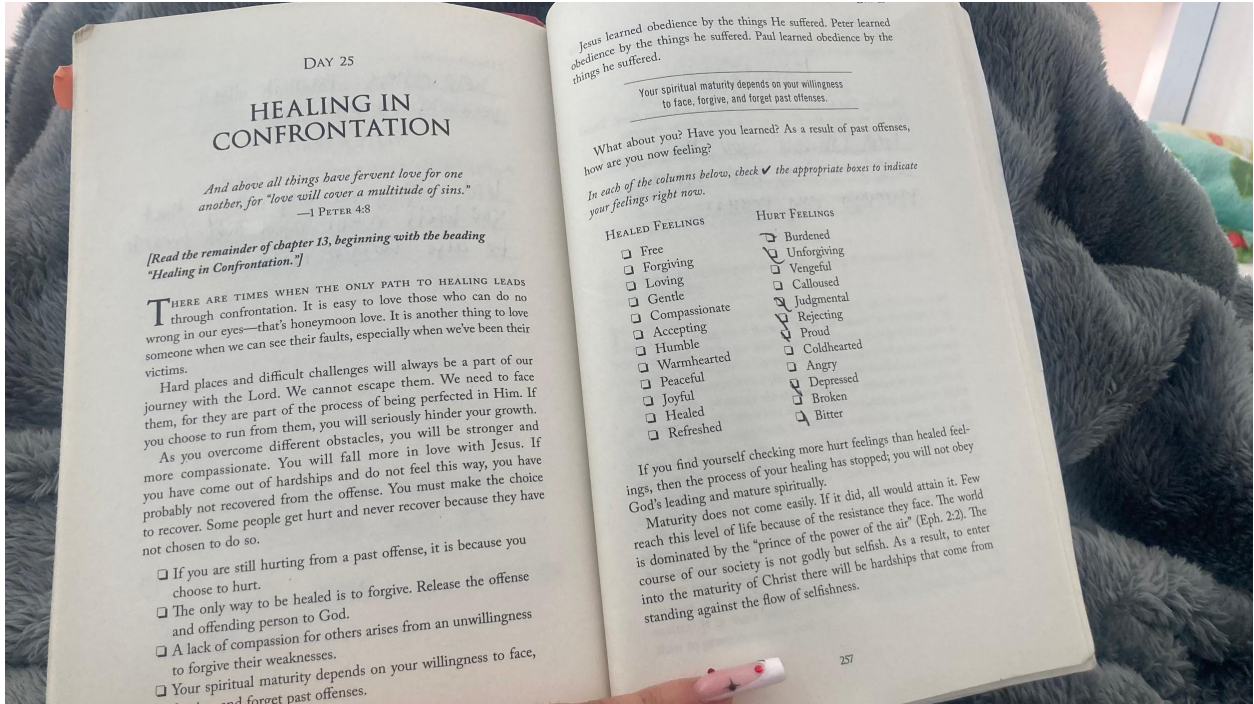
WRITE A PRAYER...

*Thanking God for the trials and tribulations you have faced. Thank Him for the results that have come as a result of these struggles.*

Lord i thank you that you  
are making me stronger  
through my trials.

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Sometimes your observations about the weaknesses of church leadership are correct. Perhaps David should have taken action against Amnon. Perhaps a leader has areas of error. But who is the judge—you or the Lord? Remember that if you sow strife, you will reap it.

The Holy Spirit convicts as He speaks through one's conscience. We must not ignore His conviction or quench His voice. If you have done this, repent before God and open your heart to His correction.

WRITE A PRAYER...

Asking God to remove a critical spirit from you.

Lord a pray you will remove any judgement or criticism from my heart + life

ESCAPING THE TRAP

*This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.*  
—Acts 24:16

[Read chapter 13, stopping at the heading "Healing in Confrontation."]

IT TAKES EFFORT TO STAY FREE FROM OFFENSE. PAUL COMPARES IT to exercising. If we exercise our bodies, we are less prone to injury. When we exercise forgiveness and refuse to take up offenses, then we keep our consciences fit and clean.

It takes effort to stay free from offense.

Sometimes others offend us, and it is not hard to forgive. We have exercised our hearts so they are in condition to handle offense; therefore, no injury or permanent damage results. But some offenses will be more challenging than those for which we've been trained to handle. This extra strain may cause a wound or injury, after which we will have to exercise spiritually to be healed again. But the result will be worth the effort. Are you facing a hurtful, serious wound? The exercise needed for recovery is listed below.

After reading each step, write down the specific response you will make in order to achieve recovery.

- 1. Recognize that you are hurt.

I have been hurt by my dad, stepmom, sister

A POTENTIAL KING DEFILED

*And Absalom spoke to his brother Amnon neither good nor bad. For Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar.*  
—2 SAMUEL 13:22

[Read the remainder of chapter 12, beginning with the heading "A Potential King Defiled."]

ABSALOM AVENGED TAMAR'S RAPE BY MURDERING AMNON. HE also held bitterness in his heart against David for not punishing Amnon for the rape of Absalom's sister. Absalom's thoughts were poisoned with bitterness. He became an expert critic of David's weaknesses. Yet he hoped his father would call for him. When David did not, this fueled Absalom's resentment.

Out of this offended critical attitude, Absalom began to draw to himself anyone who was discontented. He made himself available to all Israel, taking time to listen to their complaints. He lamented that things would be different if only he were king. He judged their cases, since it appeared the king had no time for them. Perhaps Absalom judged their cases because he felt he had not been served justice in his own.

He seemed to be concerned for the people. The Bible says Absalom stole the hearts of Israel from his father, David. But was he genuinely concerned for them, or was he seeking a way to overthrow David, the one who had offended him?

The Holy Spirit convicts as He speaks through one's conscience.

Assistants to leaders in a church often become offended by the person they serve. They soon become critical, experts at all that is wrong with their leader, or those he or she appoints. They become offended. Their sight is distorted. They see from a totally different perspective than God's.

Complete the following sentences:

When people come to me with criticisms of church leadership, I \_\_\_\_\_

seek no revenge but speak life + truth & dont participate in gossip.

When I am critical of church leadership, I \_\_\_\_\_  
ask the lord to renew my heart

The most effective way to handle offenses in the body of Christ is \_\_\_\_\_  
forgive others

Make a list of any people in the church who offend you, including the leadership. Write down their names, and then write down the date when you will go to them and ask forgiveness for your offense.

Name	When you will ask forgiveness
<u>Abraham</u>	<u>today</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



DAY 22

## REVENGE: THE TRAP

*Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.*  
—ROMANS 12:17

[Read chapter 12, stopping at the heading "A Potential King Defiled."]

**H**OLDING ON TO AN OFFENSE OF UNFORGIVENESS IS LIKE HOLDING a debt against someone. When one person is wronged by another, he believes a debt is owed him. He expects payment of some sort, whether monetary or not. However, it is unrighteous for us as children of God to avenge ourselves.

Read the following scriptures, and then, in a phrase, summarize what they teach about revenge.

Romans 12:19  
leave revenge for the Lord

James 4:12; 5:9  
God alone is the judge so we leave it to him.

Matthew 5:38-42  
we must be more loving to those who hurt us.

DAY 22

Jesus eliminates any gray areas for grudges. In fact, He says that our attitude is to be so far removed from avenging ourselves that we are willing to open ourselves to the possibility of being taken advantage of again.

We are admonished to be rooted and grounded in the love of God.

Jesus likened the condition of our hearts to that of soil. We are admonished to be rooted and grounded in the love of God. The seed of God's Word will then take root in our hearts, will grow, and will eventually produce the fruit of righteousness—love, joy, long-suffering, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (See Galatians 5:22-23.)

However, ground will produce only what is planted in it. If we plant seeds of debt, unforgiveness, and offense, another root will spring up in place of the love of God. It is called the root of bitterness (Heb. 12:14-15). Bitterness is a root. If roots are nursed, watered, protected, fed, and given attention, they increase in depth and strength. If not dealt with quickly, roots are hard to pull up. The strength of the offense will continue to grow. Soon, instead of the fruit of righteousness being produced, we will see a harvest of anger, resentment, jealousy, hatred, strife, and discord. Jesus called these evil fruits worthless. (See Matthew 7:19-20.)

WRITE A PRAYER...

Thanking God that His peace has come into your life as a result of releasing the offenses that had blocked your heart.

Lord I thank you for my peace & renewed heart that comes with forgetting others

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DAY 21

## THE UNFORGIVING SERVANT

*Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."*  
—MATTHEW 18:21-22

[Read the remainder of chapter 11, beginning with the heading "The Unforgiving Servant."]

**J**ESUS TAUGHT PETER AND THE DISCIPLES THAT FORGIVING OTHERS is based on God's unlimited forgiveness. To emphasize this, Jesus told the parable of the unforgiving servant.

Read again this parable in Matthew 18:23-35. Then complete these sentences:

Forme, the main point of the parable is forgive as you want to be forgiven

What I hear God saying to me through this parable is don't hold anything against someone.

The offenses we hold against each other, compared to our offenses against God, are like \$4,000 compared to \$14.5 billion. We may have been treated badly by someone else, but it does not compare with our

DAY 21

Rank the following offenses that are the most difficult (1) to the least difficult (7) for you to forgive.

- 5 Gossip against me
- 1 Someone physically or emotionally abusing me
- 3 Someone physically or emotionally abusing someone I love
- 2 Someone lying to me
- 4 Someone stealing from me
- 6 Someone manipulating me
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

WRITE A PRAYER...

Asking God to remove the blockage in your heart that has been caused by unforgiveness. Pray specifically for the individuals whose offenses caused the blockage.

Lord I pray you remove any un-forgiveness in my heart