



Corrie ten Boom (1892 – 1983)

A Woman of FORGIVENESS

Corrie's Story

Do you ever wonder what God has planned for your future? Are you sometimes impatient to find out? Do you feel thankful for the experiences God is bringing into your life today to prepare you to follow His call in the future?

When Corrie ten Boom turned 50 years old, she had not yet begun God's most challenging assignment for her. She was not married and had no children. Corrie and her sister Betsie cared for their father and worked with him in his watch repair shop.

Corrie trusted and obeyed God. She kept her heart, mind, and life open to hearing God. One of her sayings was, "Don't bother to give God instructions, just report for duty."

War

Corrie's family loved the Jewish people. Generations of her family had prayed for them. Her father invited Jews into their home for prayer and Bible study, and some trusted Jesus as their Savior.

World War II began, and Hitler's Nazis took over the Netherlands, including Haarlem, the city where the ten Boom family lived. Like Haman in Queen Esther's time, the Nazis were intent on the destruction of the Jews. The ten Booms began helping Jewish people get food and other necessities, ultimately hiding them in their home from the Nazis. After several years, the entire ten Boom family was caught and taken to prison. Corrie's father and sister, Betsie, died while in the concentration camp.

After her release from prison and the end of the war, Corrie helped victims of the war find healing in the love and forgiveness of Jesus. Corrie traveled to 64 countries, sharing how God taught her to forgive and have mercy toward those who mistreated and abused her and her family in prison.

Key Bible Verse:

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."
(Matthew 6:14)

Key Word: FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness: To give up resentment (bitterness toward someone who you feel has mistreated you)

The Netherlands

Corrie and her family lived in the Netherlands, also called Holland. The full name of the Netherlands is Kingdom of the Netherlands. The main language of the country is Dutch. Netherlands means "low country." Much of the country is below sea level. Dikes and sand dunes prevent it from flooding.



Corrie's Birth and Death

Corrie ten Boom was born on April 15, 1892, in Haarlem, Netherlands. She died on her birthday in 1983, in Placentia, California.



Names

Corrie's full name was Cornelia Arnolda Johanna ten Boom.



Watchmaker

Following the tradition of her grandfather and father, Corrie became a licensed watchmaker. Corrie was distinguished in that she was not only the first female watchmaker in her family, but also in The Netherlands.



The 100-Year Prayer Meeting

In 1844, Corrie's grandfather, Willem ten Boom, moved a prayer meeting for the Jewish people from the church he attended into his home. These prayer meetings continued for 100 years, until Feb. 28, 1944, when Nazi soldiers arrested Corrie and her entire family for harboring Jews.



Notes of Cheer

Corrie's mother was often sick in bed. Though she was bedridden, she sent notes of cheer to others and found ways to spread God's love. She died in 1921, when Corrie was 29.



Serving God

Before the war, Corrie and her sister Betsie cared for foster children in their home in Haarlem. Corrie taught Sunday school and Bible classes, and started clubs for teenage girls. On Sunday afternoons, she held church services for developmentally disabled people.



A Godly Sister

Betsie was a godly example for Corrie in prison. She reminded Corrie to be thankful in all circumstances. Once when Corrie was upset about all the fleas in the prison, Betsie told Corrie to thank God for the fleas. Corrie thought it was a strange suggestion, but she followed Betsie's advice. Later, Betsie and Corrie found out why the guards never discovered the secret Bible study they held for the women in their quarters. Because the guards detested the fleas, they stayed away! Betsie had been wise to give thanks for the fleas. Betsie and their father died in prison.



Books and Movies

Corrie wrote numerous books about her life and her spiritual journey. *The Hiding Place*, the book about how Corrie and her family hid Jews in their home, was made into a movie in 1975. Later, Corrie appeared in a movie about her life called *Corrie: The Lives She Touched*.

Dutch Words Puzzle



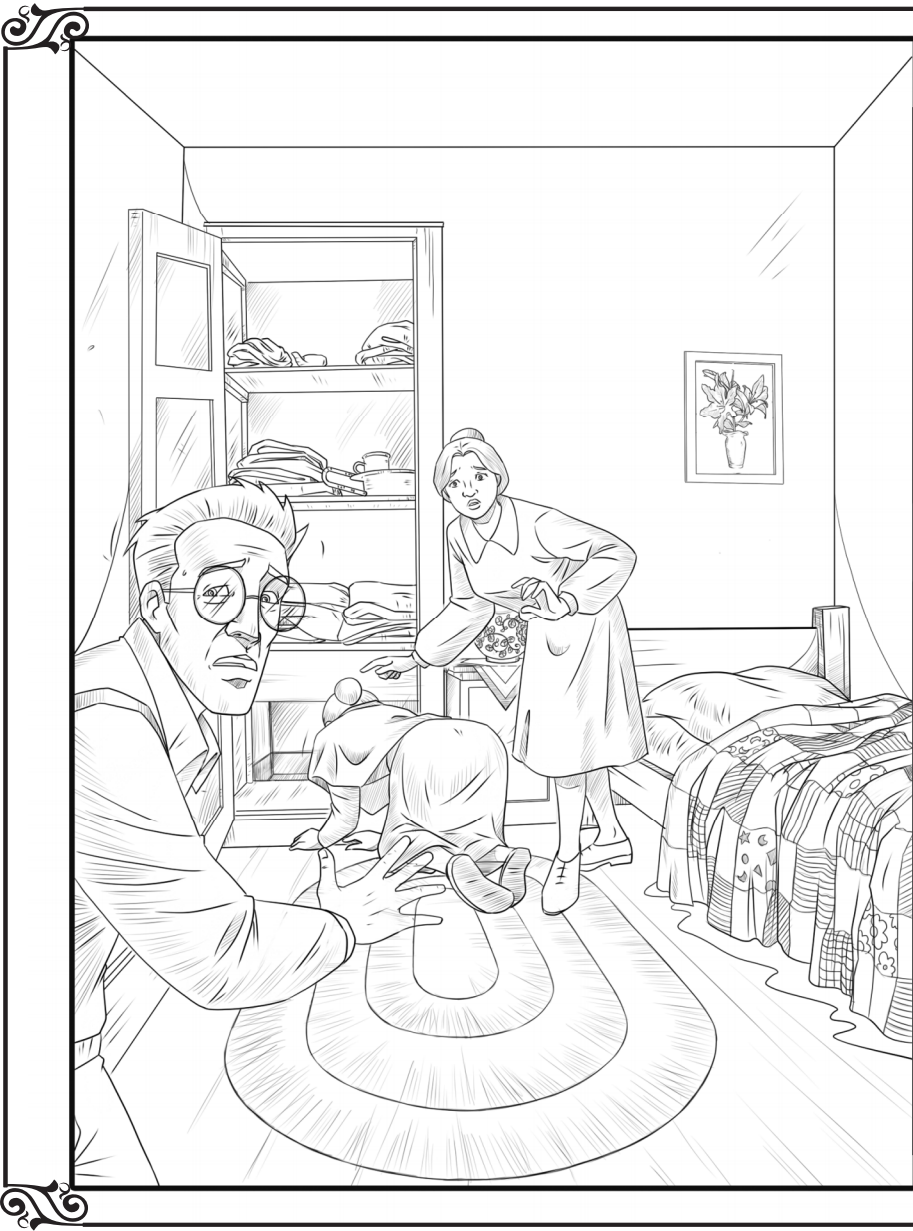
In the following puzzle, find the Dutch words from the list below the puzzle.

(The English words in the list are not found in the puzzle.) The words can be found vertically (up and down) and horizontally (from left to right). Answers are in the Answer Key.

g	e	l	o	o	f	a	z	j	c	x	e	n	v	f
b	y	d	o	w	u	g	b	e	w	a	k	e	r	t
h	s	i	r	r	v	j	q	z	k	p	a	d	l	o
m	n	a	l	z	a	b	y	u	c	w	m	e	d	x
e	w	j	o	o	d	s	r	s	f	g	e	r	h	t
u	h	s	g	v	e	r	e	a	d	e	r	l	o	i
r	j	q	k	e	r	p	l	o	n	a	y	a	r	c
m	b	v	e	r	s	t	o	p	p	e	n	n	l	z
r	x	d	e	t	f	g	t	g	v	u	w	d	o	c
e	h	v	e	r	g	e	v	e	n	b	s	i	g	n
d	r	j	q	o	l	o	c	h	r	i	s	t	e	n
d	m	a	z	u	s	b	x	e	y	j	c	z	p	k
i	d	w	e	w	v	u	g	i	t	b	s	r	h	f
n	i	m	o	e	d	p	j	m	p	e	l	n	k	q
g	e	v	a	n	g	e	n	i	s	l	a	d	m	m

English	Dutch
Christian	= christen
Jesus	= Jezus
Netherlands	= Nederland
prison	= gevangenis
forgive	= vergeven
watch (wristwatch)	= horloge
hide	= verstoppen
secret	= geheim
room	= kamer
father	= vader

English	Dutch
sister	= zus
trust	= vertrouwen
Jews	= Joodse
salvation	= redding
Bible	= Bijbel
war	= oorlog
faith	= geloof
courage	= moed
traitor	= verrader
guard	= bewaker



The ten Booms hid Jewish friends in a secret place in their home.



Nazi soldiers patrolled the streets near the ten Booms' home and shop.

The Weight of Unforgiveness



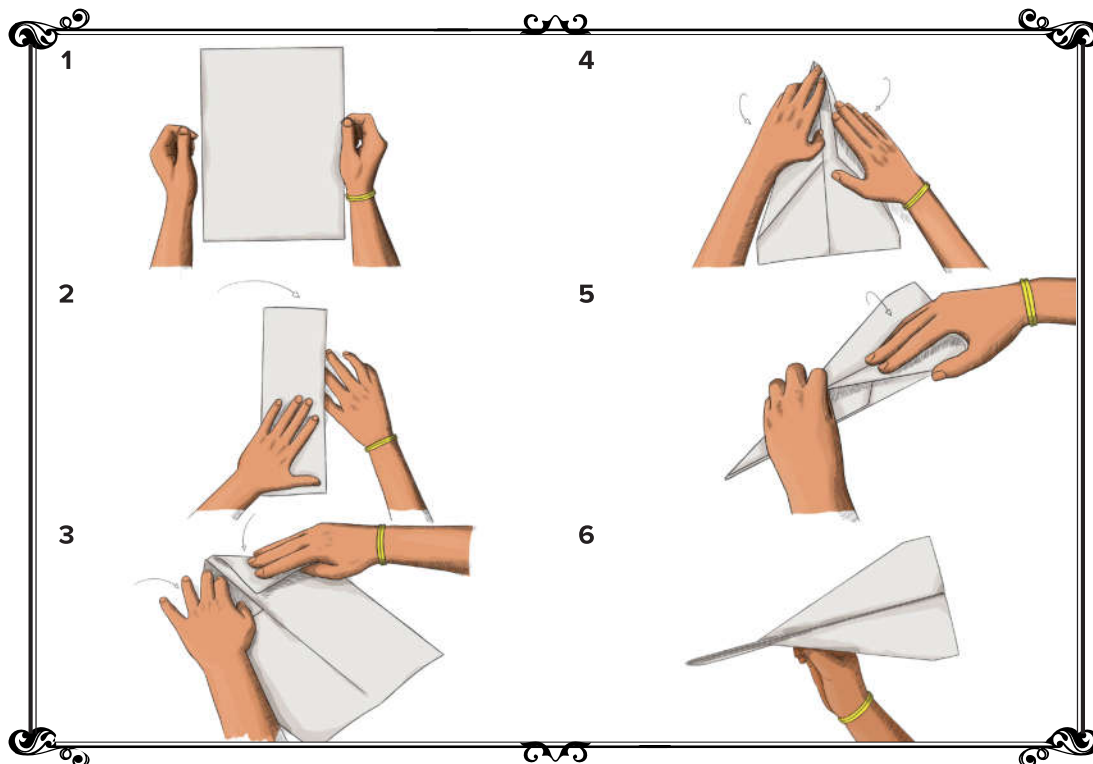
Unforgiveness can weigh down our hearts and keep us from having peace. Mark 11:25 tells us that unforgiveness may even hinder our prayers. After Corrie ten Boom forgave her former persecutor, she felt God’s love and peace. (See the story “Struggling to Forgive” on page 100.)

Make a paper airplane, and tape a nickel to the underside of one wing. Try to fly the plane. How well does it fly? The coins are not visible from the top, and the plane looks fine. The coin represents the resentment and unforgiveness you may feel after someone is rude to you or pushes you, or when your parents or teachers correct you.

Tape another coin to the plane and try to fly it, then still another. As resentments continue to grow, our hearts are not free to become what God has planned for us to be. Even if we look fine to others from the outside, hidden resentment is sin against God and harmful to our growth as Christians.

Make another plane, but don’t tape a coin to it. How does it fly? When it’s not weighed down, it is free to fulfill the purpose for which it was made — just as we, like Corrie ten Boom, are free to experience God’s peace and love when we forgive others.

Make a paper airplane using a design of your choice, or follow the instructions below.



What Do You Think?



“And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:28).

Some American kids were asked, “Why do you think Christians suffer?” Here are some of their answers:

“God knows our faith will be greatly strengthened [by suffering], and if we stand up for what we believe, we will believe it even more strongly.” — Catherine, age 12

“The Bible says, ‘Although he was a Son, he learned obedience from the things which he suffered.’ If we are children of God walking in his steps, we will learn obedience, just like Jesus did, through suffering.” — Corrie, age 12 (*not Corrie ten Boom*)

“Christians suffer so that they can learn more about God.” — Rose, age 8

Corrie’s Lesson

When Corrie was a child, she heard stories of Christians suffering for their faith. She worried that she would never be strong enough to suffer for her faith. Corrie’s father was a wise man. He reminded her of all the times they had traveled on the train. Then he asked Corrie, “When do I give you the ticket for the trip? Three weeks before we go?”

“No,” answered Corrie. “You give me the ticket right before we get on the train.”

Corrie’s father told her that our wise heavenly Father knows just when we are going to need things, too. “When you are called upon for the honor of suffering for Jesus, He will give you the strength you need, just in time.”

What are your thoughts about suffering?

Will you trust God to give you the strength you need “just in time?”



Corrie ten Boom traveled around the world teaching people what she learned about faith and forgiveness during her time in prison.

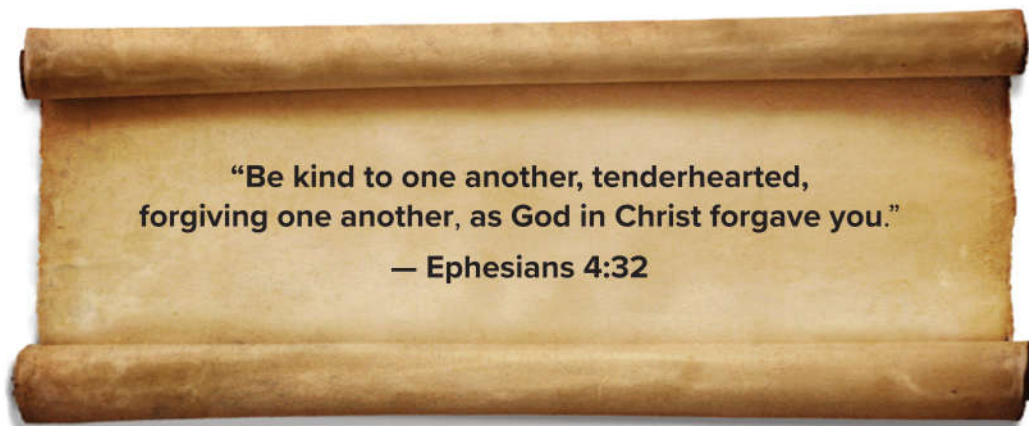
“God forgives,” she told the Germans after the Allied forces ended the war and Germany was defeated. She knew that was what they needed to hear.

One day after she spoke at a church in Germany, a man from the crowd approached her. Suddenly, she remembered where she had seen him before. He was one of the cruel guards who had mistreated Corrie and her sister Betsie in a German prison camp.

“I have become a Christian,” the man told Corrie. “I know that God has forgiven me, but will you forgive me?” He extended his hand to her.

Corrie struggled to obey. She prayed for help to lift her hand toward his. As she put her hand in his, God provided her the strength to truly feel forgiveness for the man. Corrie was grateful for God’s great grace, because she knew the verse “But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses (Matthew 6:15).”

Corrie asked for God’s help to forgive the former prison guard. Are there any of God’s commands that you feel you can’t obey without His help? Will you ask Him to help you?



To Think About

- Are there people in the world, or groups of people, that you think God would not forgive if they asked Him for forgiveness? Is there anyone you know of that you feel you could never forgive?
- Why do you think it is hard to forgive some people?
- Does anyone deserve God’s forgiveness more or less than anyone else?