

FORGIVENESS

What is Forgiveness?

Graciously freeing an offender from his/her offense and what they owe you

How do I get there?

1. Immediately, take time to understand your hurt
 - Why you are hurting?
 - What and who it is that hurt you?
2. Acknowledge that everything is broken because of sin - Romans 8:20-21, Ephesians 2:1-2
 - This includes the person or people that caused you harm AS WELL as yourself
 - This should cause you to take responsibility for your part
 - Remind yourself that the person that hurt you is flawed
 - Remind yourself that the battle is not against flesh and blood - Romans 8:38-39; that there is an unseen battle
3. Determine what it is that you believe you are owed from the person that hurt you
4. Read about and Meditate on the depth of the sacrifice of Jesus
 - Philippians 2:5-8 and Hebrews 2:9-10 speak of how God the Son humbled himself and came in the form of man.
 - Matthew 26-27:56 and Romans 5:6-11 describe His death at the hands of His creation (humans).
 - Praise God for the sacrifice of Jesus!
5. Understand that forgiveness has to be offered - Matthew 6:14-15
 - To not forgive only puts you in prison and hurts your fellowship with God
 - Resist all the excuses to not offer forgiveness
 - “My pain is so great, I know God would not expect me to just forgive”
 - “That person isn’t sorry or repentant and haven’t changed so why should I forgive them”
 - “That person should not get off so easily, they should feel what I have felt”
 - “I could never have a restored relationship with that offender so why bother forgiving”
 - “Maybe if I ignore it long enough it will go away”
6. Cancel the debt
 - Forgiveness is a decision not a feeling. Decide to forgive.
 - Decide that the offending party no longer owes you anything.
7. Resist and Remember
 - Count on the evil one to continually make you question the forgiveness that you offered and bring up the emotions of the hurt and pain you experienced. You must resist and remember again the debt is cancelled. - James 4:7

Notes:

- Prayer must be at the forefront in all of this
- Forgiveness only takes 1 person and should be offered as quickly as possible yet understandably trust can take a long time to develop again
- There may be stages of forgiveness. Don’t give up. You don’t want to stop at one stage but go through all the way to full forgiveness.
 - Indicators of improvement include:
 - Intensity - how strong the negative feelings are towards the offender when you hear their name, think of or see them
 - Duration - how long the negative feelings towards the offender lasts when you hear their name, think of or see them
 - Frequency - how often you have the negative feelings towards the offender when you hear their name, think of or see them
 - A practical way to measure progress is to journal. This allows you to look at the start of the forgiveness journey and see how God has worked as time has went on
- A trustworthy, godly Pastor, friend or mentor can be helpful in talking through this with

For more information and practical tools, visit
fbcstrongsville.com/resources.