

# FORGIVENESS

What is Forgiveness?

Graciously freeing an offender from his/her offense and the payment it requires - Psalm 103:10-13; Isaiah 43:25, 55:7; Jeremiah 31:34; Colossians 3:13-14

Why is asking for and giving forgiveness so important for us as believer?

- Unforgiveness kills - Matthew 5:21-25, 6:14-15; Ephesians 4:26-27
- Forgiveness is life giving - Ephesians 4:1-6; 32; Colossians 3:13-14; 1 Peter 4:8

How do you I get there?

## 6 Steps

1. Understand
2. Remember
3. Meditate
4. Determine
5. Cancel
6. Dismiss

1. Understand - Immediately, take time to understand your hurt
  - Why are you hurting?
  - What and who it is that hurt you?
2. Remember - Remember that everything is broken because of sin
  - This brokenness includes the person or people that caused you harms AS WELL as yourself and all creation - Romans 8:20-21
    - You cannot deflect guilt to the other person and not look at yourself
  - This should cause you to take responsibility for your part - Matthew 7:3-5
    - If you need to ask forgiveness for anything you have done in this, do it - Matthew 5:23-24
  - This should cause you to try to empathize with the other party involved
    - Look at the person as broken, not the enemy
  - This should bring you back to the reality that your battle is not against flesh and blood - Romans 8:38-39
    - There is an unseen battle and Satan is the enemy
3. Meditate - Meditate on the depth of the sacrifice of Jesus
  - 3 Things
    - God is perfect
    - He hates sin
    - In spite of that, upon repentance and faith in Christ, He forgave your sin
      - 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 - Matthew 27:57-28:20
4. Determine - Determine what it is that you believe you are owed
  - It may help to actually take time and write down what it is that you believe you are owed due to offense you experienced. God uses putting pen to paper.

For more information and practical tools, visit

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## 5. Cancel - Cancel the debt you believe you are owed

- Forgiveness is a decision not a feeling. Decide to forgive.
- Based on the sacrifice of Jesus, decide that the offending party does not owe you anything any longer graciously freeing them from their offense and the payment it requires.
  - To not forgive hurts your fellowship with God - Matthew 6:14-15
  - Forgiveness costs you pride, desire for revenge, bitterness, anger but it is worth it. To not forgive means you hold on to all of that and truly, holding on to all of that only puts you in prison and hurts you.
  - You cannot minimize or deny the need to forgive thus you must resist all the excuses your flesh and the devil give you to not offer forgiveness - - Luke 17:1-4; James 4:7
    - “My pain is so great, I know God would not expect me to just forgive”
    - “That person is not 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 person so why bother forgiving.”
    - “Maybe if I ignore it long enough it will go away.”

## 6. Dismiss - Dismiss the case against the offender

- Count on your flesh and the evil one to continually make you question the forgiveness that you offered and/or bring up the emotions of the hurt and pain you experienced. If/when that takes place, you must dismiss the case you had against the offender by resisting replaying what happened in your mind and remembering that you have already forgiven - Proverbs 17:9; James 4:7

### Notes:

- Regular time in God’s word and prayer (for yourself and the offender - Matthew 5:44) is vitally important all through this
- Forgiveness only takes 1 person and should be offered as quickly as possible yet understandably trust will take time to redevelop if that is even possible
  - Even if a relationship cannot or should not be re-established, forgiveness is still possible
- Vocally asking for forgiveness or giving forgiveness brings closure.
- True forgiveness may come in stages. Do not give up! You don’t want to stop at one stage but go through all the way to cancelling the debt and dismissing the case.
  - 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 last 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
- Talking to a mature, wise, believing mentor, friend, family member or pastor and asking them to pray for and with you can be helpful

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