

Forgiveness

Scriptures: Matthew 6:14-15 Matthew 18:20-23 Colossians 3:12-13

Definition: Forgiveness is a costly sacrifice. You willingly absorb the cost of what was done to you without bitterness, resentment or retaliation. Forgiveness is a decision and a process. Like grief, we need to continually work at it.

You have forgiven someone when you can:

- Wish them well
- Pray for them
- Feel no bitterness toward them

If you don't forgive, your heart is not right with God. God calls us to forgive because we have been forgiven.

If you don't forgive:

- You don't understand or believe the Gospel.
- You want power and control.
- You are afraid to take the first step.
- You don't trust God to protect the outcome.

Forgiveness is not:

- Forgetting
- Denying
- Waiting for an apology
- Pain free
- A one-time event
- Trusting them again

PATHWAY OF FORGIVENES

1. Confess your hurt and anger to God. Accept your inability to change circumstances and confess you need God's help and want to forgive.
2. Pray and/or write down exactly what you need to forgive and who you need to forgive. Be as specific as possible.
3. Remind yourself of your own sin and guilt before God. Remind yourself of your own need of forgiveness before God and others. Jesus died for your sins and has shown you undeserved grace and mercy.
4. Pray a prayer of release. Release the anger, bitterness and unforgiveness. Ask God to help you forgive and be free from what you wrote down in step #2. Let go of the need to control or hold on to the situation.
5. Ask for support and accountability from those you love and trust. Invite two-three people you trust to pray for you and help your process of forgiving.
6. Repeat steps 1-5 as many times as necessary.

RESOURCES

- **Articles**

- Worshiping with Those Who Hurt You
- You Can Forgive Your Parents
- What the Larry Nassar Case Can Teach Us About Guilt and Forgiveness

- **Books**

- *Choosing Forgiveness* by Nancy Leigh DeMoss
- *The Gift of Forgiveness* by Charles Stanley
- *The Freedom of Forgiveness* by John MacArthur