

The Power of Forgiveness

Part II: How?



■ by Debi Mitchell, MS, LMFT

“...but I say to you, love your enemies...” – Jesus

To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.” – Lewis B. Smedes

Those who understand the path of forgiveness have learned to appreciate the beauty and freedom inherent in letting go of their right to anger and negativity. They have also learned that there can be many barriers or stumbling blocks when trying to move in that direction. Understanding that forgiveness is important does not mean that it is suddenly easy to do. Here are some ideas for when you find the journey more difficult than you expected:

1. Ask God for help.

Philippians 4:13 says “I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.” In light of this, I will also be adding a scriptural reference at the end of each exercise for you to look up and meditate on for additional help.

2. Practice not focusing on what happened.

We tell our story over and over again - sometimes to other people and sometimes just in our mind. The incident can become bigger and more painful every time you dwell on it, so practice stopping the talk or thought, remind yourself you are choosing to forgive, and move on to something else. Philippians 4:8

3. Try another perspective.

*Look for the positive.

What is the silver lining for your storm cloud? Sometimes it can take a LOT of looking, but it helps if you can find what good came out of the bad! Romans 8:28

*Look at the life and reasons of the one who wronged you.

Our hearts can be softened when we understand that “hurting people hurt people.” Try to see with the eyes of Christ. Luke 23:33-34; Luke 15:11-32

4. Remember your own sins and the cost of God's forgiveness.

When we acknowledge that we have sinned, hurt others, and been forgiven, appreciation for the cost of our forgiveness – the blood of Christ - overflows to those around us. Romans 2:1-3; Romans 5:6-10

5. Pray for the person you are choosing to forgive.

This isn't praying down the wrath of God! It's truly difficult to hold onto anger and pray for God to bless someone at the same time. James 3:9-10; Matthew 5:43-45

6. Get help if you need it.

Sometimes barriers are just too high or strong to surmount alone. If so, find a counselor who will challenge and help you to be your best – whoever God has called you to be. Proverbs 11:14

It might be the hardest thing you ever do, but it will be worth every ounce of effort!

In our Mar/Apr 2013 *Pressing On* issue, Debi shared “*The Power of Forgiveness—Part I: Why?*”

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<http://www.chicagochristiancounseling.org/newsletters.html>



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