

# How to FORGIVE

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*Whether we like it or not, God commands us to forgive when others wrong us.  
There are no qualifiers and no exception clauses to the command.  
God just says, "Forgive!"*

Additionally, He said that if we do not forgive others, our sins won't be forgiven either. (Matthew 6:14-15) We are expected to forgive no matter what the circumstances and no matter how many times we are offended. – seventy times seven. (Matt. 18:21-22) The number seventy means countless times, while seven signifies perfection. This means that Jesus expects us to forgive others countless times to perfection or infinity. Forgiveness is important because it is a command, and disobedience in this area, as in all others, is rebellion, and rebellion opens the door for the enemy to have legal right to oppress us. Even Jesus, our Example in all things, forgave from the cross (immediately) those who were torturing and murdering Him. Should we do less?

Below is a description of the process I have found to be very helpful.

## How does one forgive?

- 1) **Decide** to forgive. This is based on an act of your will, not on feelings. It is a choice between obedience and rebellion.
- 2) **Record** your decision, including the time, date, and location of your choice to forgive. This is an important part of walking it out.
- 3) **Pray for God's grace** to be able to hold fast to your decision no matter what happens – and things *will* happen! It absolutely is God's will that your heart change toward the person you are forgiving, so when you ask Him, He *will* grant your request. (1 John 5:14-15)
- 4) **Pray for the offender**, asking God to bless him in all possible ways. It is important to pray for him the same way you would pray for a loved one, because Jesus said, "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." (Matt. 5:44) Try praying scriptures for them. Certainly, if they are not believers, pray for their salvation!
- 5) **Remind yourself** of your decision, including the date, every time you think of the person or your hurt. You might say, "God, that was taken care of on X date, and I am counting on you to change my heart and help me to love \_\_\_\_\_. I know that this is totally impossible in my own strength, but I choose to continue to obey you and allow you to work in my heart by your Holy Spirit. With your help, I will now pray for \_\_\_\_\_ according to your heart and will for them."
- 6) **Refuse** the enemy's promptings and immediately focus on God. As you continue to do this as many times a day as necessary, your heart and mind will be healed and transformed. Eventually, you will remember the offense and the person without the pain and anger that you felt at the beginning. You will also experience God's love in your heart for the person who offended you. Only God could accomplish that!

## How do you relate to this forgiven offender?

I believe there is a difference between forgiveness and reconciliation. First, forgiveness is dependent on the person who was wronged (you), while reconciliation requires the cooperation of both parties. Second, forgiveness is not necessarily synonymous with trust. Third, some people are simply not safe, physically, emotionally, or spiritually, to be around or to have one's children around. We must forgive, but we must also exercise godly wisdom. A word of caution is necessary here. Be careful that you have actually forgiven the person and that you are not using safety as an excuse to continue to withhold forgiveness. Ask God to reveal your heart attitude to you and to guide you in any further relationship He wants you to have with the person.



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