

FORGIVENESS

Forgiveness is not forgetting. Forgiveness is choosing not to bring up past sins and use them against others. Forgiveness does not tolerate another's sin. It's okay to forgive another's sin while at the same time confronting them with the truth about their sin in love. Forgiveness does not demand revenge or repayment for past hurts. You must choose whether to live in bitterness and resentment for another's sin against you or to obey God, forgive that person, and live in peace with God, yourself, and that person.

With your list of people that you need to forgive, take these steps:

1. Pray a prayer like this, "Dear heavenly Father, I ask You now to bring to surface the painful memories so that I can choose to forgive those people from my heart. I ask You, too, to bring to mind all the people I need to forgive. I pray this in the precious name of Jesus, who has forgiven me and who will heal me from my hurts. Amen." Then write their names or initials on your paper.
2. Next to their names write how you feel about the people and their offenses. (Pause)
3. Realize that the cross of Jesus makes forgiveness possible, right, and fair. Read Isaiah 53:5-6
4. Decide that you will bear the burden of each person's sin, deciding not to strike back or take revenge.
- 5. Decide to forgive.**
6. Take your list to God and pray the following: I forgive [name] for [list of offenses], even though it made me feel [express to God how it made you feel].
7. Destroy the list.
8. Try to understand the people you have forgiven. They are victims also.
9. Do not expect that your decision to forgive will result in major changes in the other people. Instead, simply pray for God to work in their lives.
- 10. Expect positive results of forgiveness in you (after you choose to forgive, the feelings will follow!)**
11. Thank God for the lessons you have learned and the maturity you have gained as a result of your decision to forgive.
12. Be sure to accept your part of the blame and confess any sin to God (especially the sin of judging the person who hurt you!)