

CARE RESOURCES

FORGIVENESS

HAVING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

Forgiving others when we feel they have hurt us is always a difficult thing to do. That doesn't mean it's impossible. Forgiveness starts with a choice. We have to choose to forgive.

The problem is that when we take offense because of what others have done or said to us, we immediately lose our authority in the situation and become victims instead of victors.

We can ask God to give us a willing heart to forgive the people who have hurt us and also to give us a heart that will not take everything personally causing us to react as victims.

Understand that making the choice to forgive is the beginning of releasing the hurt that you feel. Forgiving others does not mean you have not experienced hurt. The pain you feel is real and should not be ignored. God can and will heal us from pain as we choose to forgive and not hold on to the offense that we feel.

(Col 3:13) Be gentle and forbearing with one another and, if one has a difference (a grievance or complaint) against another, readily pardoning each other; even as the Lord has [freely] forgiven you, so must you also [forgive].

GOD'S PRINCIPLE REGARDING FORGIVENESS

God's Word says: *(Matt 6:14) For if you forgive people their trespasses [their reckless and willful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment], your heavenly Father will also forgive you. (Matt 6:15) But if you do not forgive others their trespasses [their reckless and willful sins, leaving them, letting them go, and giving up resentment], neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.*

God wants to bless you. He has a great future planned for you. **Forgiving others is a great next step to overcoming your past and embracing the future God has planned for you.** This is a daily process, and there will still be times you feel pain. But God is with you and will walk with you through this season of forgiving and walking toward healing and freedom.

We forgive others because Jesus has forgiven us of all our sin. Refusing to forgive or becoming bitter will hold us back from seeing God's work in and through our lives. *(Matt 18:32) Then his master called him and said to him, You contemptible and wicked attendant! I forgave and cancelled all that [great] debt of yours because you begged me to. (Matt 18:33) And should you not have had pity and mercy on your fellow attendant, as I had pity and mercy on you? (Matt 19:34) And in wrath his master turned him over to the torturers (the jailers), till he should pay all that he owed. (Matt 18:35) So also My heavenly Father will deal with every one of you if you do not freely forgive your brother from your heart his offenses.*

WHEN DO WE FORGIVE OTHERS?

Thomas Watson about 300 years ago. He is commenting on the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," and asks, When do we forgive others? The answer: **When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies mischief, but wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them.** (Thomas Watson, *Body of Divinity*, p. 581)

If we continue to hold fast to an unforgiving spirit, we will not be forgiven by God and then we will not go to heaven, because heaven is the dwelling place of forgiven people. The reason is also that holding fast to an unforgiving spirit proves that we do not trust Christ.

HOW TO APPLY GOD'S PRINCIPLE ON FORGIVENESS

1. Repent of sin. (1 John 1:9)
2. Be honest and upright when you forgive. God knows your heart and knows when you really mean it.
3. Forgive often. (Matt 18:21)
4. Make a choice to forgive. Forgiveness is not a feeling or emotion, it is a choice.
5. Protect your heart against bitterness. *(Prov 4:23) Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life.*

BE READY TO FORGIVE

(Eph 4:26) When angry, do not sin; do not ever let your wrath (your exasperation, your fury or indignation) lust until the sun goes down. (Eph 4:27) Leave no [such] room or foothold for the devil [give no opportunity to him].

(1 John 2:11) But he who hates (detest, despises) his brother [in Christ] is in darkness and walking (living) in the dark; he is straying and does not perceive or know where he is going, he cause the darkness has blinded his eyes.

(Eph 4:32) And become useful and helpful and kind to one another, tenderhearted (compassionate, understanding, loving-hearted), forgiving one another [readily and freely], as God in Christ forgave you.

BIBLICAL DEFINITION OF FORGIVENESS

1. **Resist thoughts of revenge.** *(Rom 12:19) Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave the way open for [God's] wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay (requite), says the Lord.*
2. **Do not seek to repay evil.** *(1 Thes 5:15) See that none of you repays another with evil for evil, but always aim to show kindness and seek to do good to one another and to everybody.*
3. **Bless those who curse you.** *(Luk 6:28) Invoke blessings upon and pray for the happiness of those who curse you, implore God's blessing (favour) upon those who abuse you [who revile, reproach, disparage, and high-handedly misuse you].*
4. **Don't rejoice when your enemy falls.** *(Prov 24:17) Rejoice not when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles or is overthrown. (Prov 24:18) Lest the Lord see it and it be evil in His eyes and displease Him, and He turn away His wrath from him [to expend it upon you, the worse offender].*
5. **Pray for their welfare.** *(Matt 5:44) But I tell you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.*

6. **Seek reconciliation and peace.** *(Rom 12:18) If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*
7. **Always be prepared to help.** *(Ex 23:4) If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again.*
8. **Let go all inner vows** of "I will never". [\(See prayer below\)](#)

WHAT FORGIVENESS IS NOT

1. Forgiveness is not the absence of anger against the sin that took place.

It is not expected of you to feel good about what happened, but you do not have to hold on to revengeful thoughts which can harm yourself and the other person. *(1 Pet 2:23) When He was reviled and insulted, He did not revile or offer insult in return; [when] He was abused and suffered, he made no threats [of vengeance]; but He trusted [Himself and everything] to Him Who judges fairly.*

2. Forgiveness is not the absence of serious consequences due to sin.

Thomas Watson's answer on: Is God angry with His pardoned ones? Though a child of God, after pardon, may incur his fatherly displeasure, yet his judicial wrath is removed. Though he may lay on the rod, yet he has taken away the curse. **Correction may befall the saints, but not destruction.**

Even when there is forgiveness, there will sometimes still be consequences. *(Heb 12:6) For the Lord corrects and disciplines everyone whom He loves, and He punishes, even scourges, every son whom He accepts and welcomes to His heart and cherishes. (Heb 12:10) For [our earthly fathers] disciplined us for only a short period of time and chastised us as seemed proper and good to them; but He disciplines us for our certain good that we may become sharers in His own holiness.*

3. Forgiving a person who do not want to repent or reconcile.

(Luk 17:3) Pay attention and always be on your guard [looking out for one another]. If your brother sins (misses the mark), solemnly tell him so and reprove him, and if he repents (feel sorry for having sinned), forgive him. (Luk 17:4) And even if he sins against you seven times in a day, and turns to you seven times and says, I repent [I am sorry], you must forgive him (give up resentment and consider the offense as recalled and annulled).

When a person who has done us wrong do not show any remorse, repent or wishes to turn from his wrong ways, he is cutting off the full work of forgiveness of God in his life. In such scenarios we can still lay down our own will and give our anger and resentment to God. We can seek to do good with the understanding that with such a person we will not be able to reconcile or restore the relationship. Thomas Watson said something very jolting: We are not bound to trust an enemy, but we are bound to forgive him.

PRAYER FOR HEALING FROM UNFORGIVENESS

Heavenly Father, in the Name of Jesus, I acknowledge that I have sinned against You by not forgiving those who had offended me. I have been critical and judgmental towards others. I repent of this and ask Your forgiveness. I also acknowledge my inability to forgive without Your help. Therefore, from my heart, I choose to forgive *(insert person's name and release each one individually)*.

I bring, under the blood of Jesus, all that they had done wrong towards me. I release them from owing me anything. I remit their sins against me. I release them from bondage and I ask that You bless them and lead them into a closer relationship with You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

PRAYER FOR MY ENEMIES

Father, Your Word says that I must love my enemies and pray for those who persecutes me (Matthew 5:44). [Now having received the Holy Spirit, and being led and directed by Him] if I forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven; if I retain the sins of anyone, they are retained (John 20:23). Lord I therefore forgive (left, remit, and let go of the debts, and give up resentment against) my enemies (Matthew 6:12).

Lord I need You to help me to listen to You [in order to heed, make it a practice to] love my enemies, treat them well (do good to, act nobly toward) those who detest me and pursue me with hatred (Luke 6:27). I invoke blessings upon and pray for the happiness of those who curse me, implore God's blessing (favour) upon those who abuse me [who revile, reproach, mock, and high-handedly misused me] (Luke 6:28). Even though this might be difficult for me I know that I have strength for all things in Christ who empowers me [I am ready for anything and equal to anything through Him who infuses inner strength into me; I am self-sufficient in Christ's sufficiency] (Philippians 4:13).

Through the help of Your Word I am an imitator of You [I copy You and follow Your example], as a well-beloved and forgiven child [imitates their father] (Ephesians 5:1).

Father, I thank You that I have great peace in this situation, for I love Your law and I refuse to take offence towards (*name*) and refuse to stumble because of this situation (Psalm 119:165). I am blessed (happy – with life-joy and satisfaction in Your favour and salvation, apart from outward conditions – and to be envied) when I take no offence in You and when I am not hurt, resentful, annoyed, repelled or made to stumble [whatever may occur] (Luke 7:23).

And now Father I roll my works upon You [commit and trust them wholly to You; You will cause my thoughts to become agreeable to Your will, and] so shall my plans be established and succeed (Proverbs 16:3). In Jesus' Name. Amen.

HEALING FROM INNER VOWS

Dear Heavenly Father, I confess the vow of “I will never let anyone hurt (or use) me again; I will never try anything again; I will never be rejected again; I will never trust a man (or woman) again” as a sin and ask forgiveness for it.

I confess self-imposed word curses of mental and / or emotional breakdown: “It's driving me crazy; I just can't take it anymore; they just drive me mad”.

I confess self-imposed word curses of repeated or chronic sickness: “Whenever there's a bug, I catch it; I'm sick and tired; it runs in the family, so I guess I'm next”.

I confess self-imposed word curses of barrenness, a tendency to miscarry, or other related female problems: “I don't think I'll ever get pregnant; I've got the 'curse' again; I just know I'm going to lose this one; I always do”.

I confess self-imposed word curses of breakdown of a marriage and family alienation: “the palm reader said my spouse would leave me; somehow I always knew my spouse would find another partner; in our family, we have always fought like cats and dogs”.

I confess self-imposed word curses of experiencing continued financial insufficiency: "I never can make ends meet; my parents were the same; I can't afford to tithe; I hate those 'fat cats'. They always get what they want and it never happens to me.

I confess self-imposed word curses of being accident-prone: "It always happens to me; I knew there was trouble ahead; I'm just a clumsy kind of person".

I confess self-imposed word curses of history of suicides and unnatural or untimely deaths: "What's the use of living?" "...over my dead body"; "I'd rather die than go on the way things are". I confess these self-imposed curses as sin and ask You to forgive me for it in Jesus' Name.

I realise that I used these inner vows as a mechanism to keep my spirit from being wounded and hurt, but it has formed a wall around my heart and it has developed within me a heart of stone. I am willing to remove the walls and renounce the vows in order to experience Your full love.

I acknowledge that my inner vows signify that some part of my life will be lived in a way contrary to Your plan and purpose, and it will limit my potential to be used by You; and it is an invitation for the enemy to control me in that particular area.

As my spirit was programmed to follow the vows I realise that I also opened myself up to demonic bondages, such as a spirit of control and independence, as I have placed myself on the throne of my life with vows such as "I have to make sure that no one is ever in a place to tell me what to do; I can never get into a relationship; I keep myself independent, etc".

In the Name of Jesus, I take back any lost ground and give it to the Lord. I break this inner vows of *(name the specific inner vows you have made)*, and release myself from it as an act of obedience to God. Please have Your way and will with me, Lord.

Thank You that I will now be able to feel Your love and hear Your voice because I don't have walls around me anymore. Thank You that You are my wall of protection and that my trust is restored by trusting in You. Thank You that You keep my heart from being injured as I do not place my expectations on people but on You. In Jesus' Name. Amen.



If you would like to speak to someone about your situation, we would love to help you and pray with you. Please contact the El Shaddai FGC Offices or you can email us at info@taniab.co.za