



GUIDELINE FOR FORGIVENESS

"Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you."

Ephesians 4:31-32

1. Name and define the pain/loss involved (whether to you personally or to a group of people). Acknowledge the hurt and the hate.
2. Define the debt you feel you are owed. What do you want from the offender(s)?
3. Acknowledge that God is the judge and will provide final justice. Trust that He will deal with the offender(s).
4. Agree to live with the consequence of the actions of the offender(s) -absorbing the pain/loss, whether or not they ever acknowledge their wrongdoing or ask for forgiveness.
5. Let go of the demand for revenge - the debt you feel owed to you - and let God deal with them. Confess your own hate, impatience, bitterness, resentment, and slander.
6. Ask God to help you forgive from the heart. Recognize Christ's forgiveness for you, and why you therefore should be willing to forgive others as well.
7. Act on your forgiveness by praying for the offender(s), taking the initial step to try to restore the relationship, seeking reconciliation and/or rebuilding trust. (Do this step only if it is safe. For instance, it is not recommended in cases of abuse.)



FORGIVENESS EXERCISE

1) **ASK** God to reveal someone you need to forgive. Take time to really pause and listen. Write down any name(s) that come to mind.

2) **NAME** what they did and the pain/hurt you experienced.

3) **LEARN** from the situation. Write down what you learned and what you intend to do differently as a result. (For example, are there boundaries that need to be implemented?)

4) **EXTEND** forgiveness to the person(s). Pray aloud: "Lord Jesus, I forgive (name) for... (specifically identifying all offenses and painful memories)."

5) **ACT** on your forgiveness. Pause and ask the Lord what next steps you need to take. Do you need to let the person know directly that you forgave them? Should you write a letter? Schedule a meetup? Send a text? Initiate something to restore the relationship (but only if safe to do so).