

# **FORGIVENESS PRAYERS & STEPS**

## **Steps To Forgiveness**

### **1. Ask God to reveal to your mind the people you need to forgive**

Make a list of everyone God brings to your mind. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you and write the names on a separate piece of paper. Even if you think there is no one, just ask God to bring up all the right names. The two most overlooked names are yourself and God.

**Forgiving yourself:** Only God can forgive your sins — but for many people, especially perfectionists, the hardest person to forgive is themselves, for letting themselves down. You are in effect accepting God's forgiveness and refusing to listen to the devil's accusations. Some people are really helped by being able to say, "I forgive myself for [list everything you hold against yourself], and I let myself off my own hook."

**Forgiving God:** Forgiving God is harder to understand because God has done nothing wrong. He has always acted in your best interests. But because you have not understood God's larger plan, or because you have blamed God for something that other people or the devil have done, you may have felt that God has let you down.

Many people feel disappointed with God, even angry with Him, because He didn't answer their prayer; He didn't seem to be there for them. They cried out for help and nothing came. Usually, they are embarrassed to admit it. But God knows anyway and He's big enough to handle it.

If you feel uncomfortable telling God, you forgive Him, say something like, "I release the expectations, thoughts, and feelings I have had against You."

### **2. Acknowledge the hurt and the hate**

Jesus instructed us to forgive from the heart. That's much more than simply saying "I forgive" and pretending we've dealt with it. To forgive

from the heart we need to face the hurt and the hate. People try to suppress their emotional pain, but it is trying to surface so that we can let it go.

### **3. Understand the significance of the cross**

The cross is what makes forgiveness legally and morally right. Jesus has already taken upon Himself your sins and the sins of the person who has hurt you. He died “once for all” (Hebrews 10:10). When your heart says, “It isn’t fair,” remember that the justice is in the cross.

### **4. Decide that you will bear the burden of each person’s sin**

You need to make a choice not to use the information you have against that person in the future.

“He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends” (Proverbs 17:9). That doesn’t mean that you never testify in a court of law — however, you do it not in the bitterness of unforgiveness but having first forgiven from your heart.

### **5. Decide to forgive**

Forgiveness is a crisis of the will. If you wait until you feel like doing it, you probably never will. You may feel you can’t do it — but would God really tell you to do something you couldn’t do? When He says that you can do everything through Christ who gives you strength (Philippians 4:13), is that true or not? The reality is that you have a choice to make — are you going to remain in bitterness, hooked to the past, giving the enemy an entrance to your mind; or are you going to get rid of it once and for all?

You **choose** to forgive, and in making that choice you are agreeing to live with sin and its consequences. You are choosing to let God be the avenger, and trust Him to bring justice in the end. You choose to take it to the cross and leave it there.

The gates of hell can’t prevail against the Kingdom of God. There is

nobody out there keeping you from being the person that God created you to be. The only one that can do that is you. You need to forgive, be merciful, and love as Christ has loved you. Let that person go; get on with your life; walk away free in Christ.

## **6. Take your list to God**

To forgive from your heart, say, for example, “Lord, I choose to forgive my father” and then specify what you are forgiving him for. Stay with the same person until you have told God every pain and hurt that has surfaced and be as specific as you can. It’s then helpful to take it a step further and say how it made you feel: “I choose to forgive my father for leaving us, because it made me feel abandoned.”

Tears will often come at this point, but this is not about trying to get somebody to cry. It’s making sure that it’s as thorough as possible. One lady said, “I can’t forgive my mother. I hate her.” Having recognized her real feelings of hatred, now for probably the first time she could forgive — if she didn’t admit that she hated her mother, she wouldn’t be able to forgive.

Pray as follows for each person you need to forgive: “Dear Heavenly Father, I choose to forgive [name the person] for [what they did or failed to do], because it made me feel [share the painful feelings, for example, rejected, dirty, worthless, inferior].”

Take careful note of what is said after the statement “because it made me feel.” Usually the same word (for example, “abandoned,” “stupid,” “dirty”) is repeated several times. That may well reveal a stronghold that your past experiences have led you to believe. You can tear down those strongholds by saying, for example: “I renounce the lie that I am stupid. I announce the truth that I have the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16). “I renounce the lie that I am abandoned. I announce the truth that God has promised never to leave me nor forsake me” (Hebrews 13:5). Session 8 of the *Freedom In Christ Course* teaches a specific strategy (“strongholdbusting”)

that will enable you to do this effectively and the Freedom In Christ app incorporates a “Stronghold-Buster Builder” that will be a great

help.

## **7. Destroy the list**

You are now free from those people and those events in the past.

## **8. Do not expect that forgiving others will result in changes in them**

Forgiving others is primarily about you and your relationship with God. Pray for those you have forgiven, that they may be blessed and that they too may find the freedom of forgiveness (see Matthew 5:44; 2 Corinthians 2:7).

## **9. Try to understand the people you have Forgiven**

You may find it helpful to understand some of what the other person was going through, but don't go so far as to rationalize away the sin — this is not about saying "It didn't matter," because it did matter.

## **10. Expect positive results of forgiveness in you**

Forgiveness is not about feeling good; it's about being free. However, good feelings will follow eventually. You will need to concentrate on renewing your mind so that negative ways of thinking are replaced by the truth.

## **11. Thank God for what you have learned and the maturity gained**

You are now free to move on and grow as a Christian.

## **12. Accept your part of the blame for the**

**offenses you suffered** Confess your part in any sin and know that you are forgiven. If you realize that someone has something against you, go to them and be reconciled. When you do that, be careful to simply confess your own wrongdoing rather than bringing up anything they did.

## Prayers

### **Prayer for Forgiving Others**

In a quiet area, pray and ask the Father in Jesus name to show you the unforgiven hurts, wounds, and offenses in your life. Then, listen. As the Holy Spirit calls to mind the “anythings” against “anyones” in your life, make a list (first name or face or description of event or location) of the people you need to forgive (remembering each hurt, offense, or wound they committed against you or you committed against them) and write them down.

Then, with each one and specifically pray Father, In the mighty name of Jesus, I forgive [person’s name, etc.] for [act committed] and I forgive myself for holding unforgiveness, and Father I ask You to heal the hurt in my heart, the memories in my mind and any unwillingness to let this go by the sanctifying blood of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

Dear Merciful Lord,

Thank you for your gift of forgiveness. Your only Son loved me enough to come to earth and experience the worst pain imaginable so I could be forgiven. Your mercy flows to me in spite of my faults and failures. Your Word says to “clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.” (Col. 3:14) Help me demonstrate unconditional love today, even to those who hurt me.

**Other prayers of forgiveness:**

I understand that even though I feel scarred, my emotions don't have to control my actions. Father, may Your sweet words saturate my mind and direct my thoughts. Help me release the hurt and begin to love as Jesus loves. I want to see my offender through my Savior's eyes. If I can be forgiven, so can he. I understand there are no levels to your love. We are all your children, and your desire is that none of us should perish.

You teach us to "let the peace that comes from Christ rule in our hearts." (Col. 3:15) When I forgive in words, allow your Holy Spirit to fill my heart with peace. I pray this peace that only comes from Jesus will rule in my heart, keeping out doubt and questions. And above all, I am thankful. Not just today, not just this week, but always. Thank you for the reminder, "Always be thankful." (Col. 3:15) With gratitude I can draw closer to you and let go of unforgiveness. With gratitude I can see the person who caused my pain as a child of the Most High God. Loved and accepted. Help me find the compassion that comes with true forgiveness.

And when I see the person who hurt me, bring this prayer back to my remembrance, so I can take any ungodly thoughts captive and make them obedient to Christ. (2 Cor. 10:5) And may the confidence of Christ in my heart guide me into the freedom of forgiveness. I praise you for the work you are doing in my life, teaching and perfecting my faith. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

## **Short Prayer to Forgive Others**

Dear Lord, I thank You for the power of forgiveness, and I choose to forgive everyone who has hurt me. Help me set [name anyone who has offended you] free and release them to You [Romans 12:19]. Help me bless those who have hurt me [Romans 12:14]. Help me walk in righteousness, peace, and joy, demonstrating Your life here on earth. I choose to be kind and compassionate, forgiving others, just as You forgave me [Ephesians 4:32]. In Jesus' name, amen.

## **Short Prayer to Forgive Yourself**

Father, today I ask forgiveness of all the negative and harmful words I have spoken about myself. I do not want to abuse myself in such a way again. Transform my

thoughts and let me understand how marvelously you made me. Change my habits so I use my tongue to speak hope and favor upon my life. In Jesus' name.