Forgiveness Prayer

Lord Jesus, our brother, you were betrayed by your friends and knew the deepest pain of human sin; from the cross you said, "Father, forgive them." You taught us to pray to our Father, "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." You are the lord of justice, help us to tell the truth and live it. You are the compassion of God, help us to show mercy and mean it. You are the divine healer, help us to forgive and feel it. We pray this in the power of the Holy Spirit who is our strength to let go of the past and courage to grow into our best selves. Amen.

Why Do We Forgive?

• Mental Health Reasons
• Physical Health Reasons
• Spiritual Health Reasons

What Forgiveness Is Not:

- Not Forgetting
- Not Condoning
- Not Bypassing Justice
- Not Capitulation
- Not Reconciliation

What Is Forgiveness?

Psychological Definition:

Forgiveness is a decision to let go of resentments and revenge thoughts.
Resentment

sentire - (Latin - to feel)
re - (Latin - again, as in repeat)
To feel the feelings over and over again.

What Is Forgiveness?

Religious Definition:
 Forgiveness is a decision to accept God’s grace and extend that same mercy to others by letting go of resentments due to sins, real or imagined, committed against us.

Forgiveness

Getting Past Your Past
To Grow Into A Better Future
And Be More Like God,
A God of Justice and Mercy.

THE BIG THOUGHT

God is love.
God is self-giving.
God gives us Himself in Jesus Christ.
We are made in the image of God.
We are to be like God.
We are to give of ourselves.
We give of ourselves by forgiving.

The Sermon on the Mount

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Matt 5:7

But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust. Matt 5:44

The Sermon on the Mount

and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive our trespassers; Matt 6:12

If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions. Matt 6:15-16
Two Kinds of Forgiveness

Conditional Forgiveness

Unconditional Forgiveness

...Father, forgive them, they know not what they do. Luke 23:33

Why We Don’t Forgive

Justice

Right - breach - Wrong

Injustice Gap

How to close the gap in justice.

• Apology - Conditional Forgiveness
• Court / Mediation
• Revenge – retributive justice
• Unconditional Forgiveness – restorative justice

How Do We Let Go?

• L Look deeply at what went wrong
• E Empathy for the other is key
• T Tell the story differently
• G Give the gift of forgiveness
• O One day at a time, keep forgiveness strong

Look Deeply

The beginning of forgiveness is honesty

Self-understanding

Awareness

Look Deeply

Are you a victim or a participant?

Victim - hurt by random act.

Participant - hurt in a relationship.
Look Deeply

What happened?
What really happened?

What did they do? — Two imperfect people involved.
What was your part? — Take responsibility for your part.

Forgive Yourself

If you treated your friends the way you treat yourself, would you have any?
If you can forgive a friend, why not forgive yourself?

Self-Forgiveness

When you are down on yourself substitute positive for negative thoughts.

- Focus on gratitude for what is good in your life.
- Focus on your strengths
- Do good for others
- Cultivate compassion - who loves you, who do you love?
- What have you learned?

Forgive God

- Be honest.
- Big enough to handle your anger.
- Story of 9/11
- Example of Jesus

Forgive God

1. Write down all the reasons you resent the person who hurt you.
2. Write down anything you did to harm the other person.
3. Write a letter from the other person’s point of view.
4. Write a letter to God. Ask for grace to forgive other person and yourself.

Look Deeply Exercise
Empathy – for the other is key

- Pity
- Sympathy
- Compassion
- Love

Stages of Praying for the Other Person

- Pray through gritted teeth.
- Pray they get what they deserve.
- Pray that God will give them what they need to be happy.
- Pray God will bless them, as God wants to bless them.

Put The Problem in God’s Hands

Imprecatory Psalms

Psalms of Lament and Curse: 35, 58, 69, 70, 83, 88, 109, 137, 140

Psalm 58
“Let them be like the snail that dissolves into slime.” v8

Psalm 69
“Let your burning anger overtake them.” v24

Twisted Soul Prayer

God, _____________ is a twisted soul.
Save me from being angry.
Help me to see how I can be helpful.
May your will be my will.
Bless us both. Amen

Tell The Story Differently

Put ladder! down a
the shovel and
Why Do We Tell The Story Differently?

Personal Stories Shape Our Souls

A story that ends in bitterness is a tragedy.

A story that ends in forgiveness is a triumph!

Tell The Story Differently

Tell the story to someone who can help you to reframe the story and get a new perspective.

Tell The Story Differently

Tell the story and then stop.
Just enough to take the top off the anger
Just keeps you worked up.
Assume good will rather than ill will.

Tell The Story Differently

Tell the story from God’s Point of View

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust." Matthew 5:43-48

Tell The Story Differently

The Empty Tomb

Can You Let Go of a Grudge - The Spirituality of Forgiveness

Can You Let Go of a Grudge - The Spirituality of Forgiveness

Tell The Story Differently

Have I learned anything?

Have I grown in any way?

Have I seen God at work?
Give The Gift of Forgiveness

God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him... We, for our part, love because he first loved us.
1John:16b,19

Give What We've Been Given

- The person doesn’t deserve it, that’s why it’s a gift. We bless the person as God has blessed us.
- Small miracle - Power comes from God, we don’t forgive, God forgives through us.

Give The Gift of Forgiveness

Forgiveness Is A Decision

Decisional Forgiveness

- You decide of your own free will to renounce any right to revenge.
- You decide to release the person from any emotional debt you feel they owe you.
- You treat them as you would want to be treated.

Emotional Forgiveness

You feel differently about the person.

- You don’t condemn them anymore.
- You don’t want revenge because you more positive, feelings about the person.
- You may feel sympathy, compassion or even love for the person.

The Lady Macbeth Exercise

Commit To Forgive

Go Public With Your Forgiveness

Tell somebody.

Sacrament of Reconciliation.
Forgiveness is always in the present tense.
Forgiveness is a daily decision.
Forgiveness is a way of life.
Forgiveness - the ongoing conversion of a religious.

Forgiveness is part of the vow of poverty – poverty of spirit, humility.
Forgiveness is part of the vow of obedience – obedience to Christ.

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“The Big Question: A Film About Forgiveness”
1-800-523-0236

Letting Go: Five Steps to Forgiveness
Audio Program of 1.25-minute talks on 5 CDs is available from Now You Know Media.

Can You Let Go of a Grudge: Learn to Forgive and Get On with Your Life by Frank Desiderio, CSP $17.00
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