

ESSENTIAL SKILLS OF CHRISTIANITY: EFFECTIVE FORGIVENESS

JESUS INSTRUCTS US; IT IS ESSENTIAL TO FORGIVE

Matthew 18: 23-35 NLT - Paraphrased by KSC

While teaching, Jesus explained:

The Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. ...One of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. The debtor couldn't pay... he fell down before his master and begged for patience. The master was filled with pity, and released the debtor and forgave his debt...Then the man went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars and demanded instant payment. The fellow servant begged for more time, the creditor said no and had him arrested. The king heard about it and called in the man he had forgiven and said, "You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?" Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. Jesus instructed, "That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart."

A MODERN UNDERSTANDING OF BIBLICAL FORGIVENESS

A modern understanding of biblical forgiveness has been "forgive, as an act of your will". We propose that effective forgiveness requires more than an act of the will. In addition, effective forgiveness includes various forms of release:

1. Release the person

2. Release the pain

3. Release yourself

FORGIVE IN CONNECTION OR "ENCOUNTER" WITH GOD

We recommend that all stages of this process be done from a place of relational connection with God. That connection is often called an "encounter" with God. The Bible describes forgiving in this way. In 2 Corinthians 2:10 Paul says "I have forgiven... in the presence of Christ".

So, when you realize that there is someone or something that you need to forgive, start the forgiveness work by asking God, "How are you with me now, Lord?" You may get a sense that God is near; you may get a picture of Jesus or the Father together with you in some way; or you may re-enter a memory of a previous encounter with God. Receive and enter into your connection with God by faith.

RELEASE THE PERSON

Start from a place of connection with God. Pretend to speak (or write) directly to the person. Do what you can to fully address even deep and hidden pain – for example, tell them how hurt, angry or sad you were or are. Be specific.

This is not a time to edit or be prim or proper or nice. Remember, they can't hear you. This is the time to surface and release the depth of the pain you felt and/or feel. Once you've finished surfacing and addressing the issues and the pain, we recommend that you release the person in this way:

"I choose to release you now. You owe me nothing, not even an apology. I bless you in every way."

RELEASE THE PAIN

Once again, the ideal way to do this work is from a place of *encounter* with God. You are with Him, and you actively release the pain you have been carrying to Him. Hand it over to God. In a spiritual and relational transaction, He literally takes the pain from you. Allow God to drain the pain out of your heart, mind, memory, and body. Next, we encourage you to actively receive healing from God into your heart, mind, memory, and body by faith.

RELEASE YOURSELF

Like in Matthew 18, unforgiveness puts you in a personal jail. When you release the person and the pain to God, the result is that you are released from prison and torment. Thank Him for forgiving, releasing and healing you.

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COMPLETE THE FORGIVENESS PROCESS - PRACTICAL STEPS & MODEL PRAYERS

PRAY TO FORGIVE, CANCEL THE DEBT, AND BLESS: (Matt. 18:15-35; Luke 6:27-28, Luke 6:37; Eph. 4:31-32)

Father, I forgive from my heart. There is nothing (name/s) can do to repay the debt. I cancel the debt and accept the loss. (Name/s) does not owe me anything, not even an apology. I release all of the pain that I experienced to You right now. Thank You for taking the pain. I release (name/s). I bless (name/s) from my heart.

Please forgive me for holding onto this offense. Thank you, God, for forgiving me and healing my heart, mind, memory and body. I receive Your cleansing and Your healing now.

We suggest these two additional steps and model prayers to go along with the forgiveness prayer every time

RENOUNCE BITTER ROOT JUDGEMENTS: (Heb.12:15; Matt. 7:1-5; Luke 6:37; Eph. 4:31-32; Deut. 29:18)

Hebrews12:15 (ESV) – “See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled”

God, in the name of Jesus Christ, on behalf of myself and my family line, I renounce bitterly judging (name/s) for (specific offenses; everything that I just forgave), even if it was true. Father, I ask you to cut the root of these judgments and remove them from my life. Please restore everything that has been lost as a result of these judgments.

CUT UNHOLY RELATIONAL ATTACHMENTS: (Gal. 6:7-8; Matt.19:5; Gen. 2:24; Gen. 34:1-3, 8; Prov. 4:23)

Proverbs 4:23 (AMP) – “Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it *flow* the springs of life.”

God, I ask you to cut all unholy relational ties and attachments between me and (name/s). I choose to cut every unholy tie now. Please leave only the holy bond of love between us.