

How to forgive those who have wronged you

"For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." (Matthew 6:14-15 NIV)

All of us have been hurt by others; some of us have been deeply hurt. Yet Christ commands us to forgive.

Here are 5 steps that will help you forgive:



Step #1. Focus on the hurt and anger

The purpose here is NOT to stay angry, but rather to acknowledge to God and to yourself what's really there. Focusing on your anger can provide useful information that will help you forgive.

Step #2. Identify why you are angry

Take your time and identify what happened to make you angry, and why you are angry about what happened.

Step #3. Identify why you need to stay angry

Your goal here is to let go of your anger. If you can do that now, great! Most of the time, we cannot. That's why we need to identify any reasons why we might hesitate to let go of the anger. Sometimes those reasons don't make sense to our logical minds, but they feel true anyway.

Step #4. Invite Jesus in

Share with Jesus the reasons you are angry and the reasons you feel you need to remain angry. Then ask Him what He has for you. Then wait. I've done this myself many times, and I've helped many others do this. Almost always, something powerful happens. Jesus will give you a fresh new perspective that makes it much, much easier to release your anger, and forgive.

Step #5. Forgive

If the anger is cleared up, then forgive. (If it is not, then redo Steps #1-#4.) Forgiving does NOT necessarily mean you invite the person who hurt you back into your life. It does NOT necessarily mean that you confront them, or inform them. It just means that you don't need anything from them for you to be okay, and you are able to view them and their offense from God's perspective.

Sometimes you can do this on your own, sometimes you may need the help of a godly friend or counselor.

Scriptures: Matthew 6:12-15, 18:15-35; Mark 11:25; Luke 6:37, 11:4; Ephesians 4:26, 4:32, 6:12; Romans 12:2; Revelation 3:20; Matthew 5:22; 1 Corinthians 13:5; James 1:19-20; Proverbs 17:9, 19:11; 2 Corinthians 2:7-10 (see 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 for context); Luke 17:4; John 20:23; Luke 22:50-51 (See also Matthew 26:51-54, Mark 14:47, John 18:10-11); Luke 23:34; 2 Peter 3:9.

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