



Forgiveness

## Understand What Forgiveness Is

Often, the reason we don't want to forgive someone is because we *misunderstand* what forgiveness is. We think forgiveness means we have to first stop feeling pain or forget that the offense happened. However, feeling and forgetting are not conscious actions that you can command someone to do. Since God commands us to forgive, we know that forgiveness has to be a choice that we control.

### What does the Bible remind us about forgiveness?

- ◆ Be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God, in Christ forgave you. **Ephesians 4:32**
- ◆ Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other some my calling as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. **Colossians 3:13**

### Remember What is forgiveness . . .

1. **Forgiveness is a decision, not a feeling.** It's a choice we make to cancel the relational debt that someone owes us.
2. **Forgiveness is an action or a choice** to release an offender from our punishment and entrust it all to God.

3. As Christians, we are forgiven for our offenses through Christ taking the punishment for our sin by dying on the cross. It's Jesus's work on the cross that cancels our debt.
4. **Forgiveness is also unconditional.** We can forgive regardless of whether the offender apologizes or takes responsibility. In other words, our ability to forgive is not dependent on the actions of others.
5. **Forgiveness is a command.** This leaves us with a choice. Do we choose to live out God's best and forgive or do we choose unforgiveness?
6. Choosing to forgive means we choose to enjoy the benefits of forgiveness. If we believe God is good and love, then we can trust that forgiving others is for our good.
7. Our motivation for forgiving others should come from how God has forgiven us. When focused on how someone else has sinned against us, it can be easy to minimize our own sins.
8. Vengeance is not your job; it's God's job (read Romans 12:19)

**Forgiveness isn't complicated, but it is difficult when we've experienced deep hurt. We encourage you to choose forgiveness. Remember that God commands us to forgive, and He only commands the best for His people. The benefits of forgiveness include blessings, freedom, and better relationships. Forgiveness improves physical and mental health. It also starts us on the road to healing and living in the present.**

## **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, according to **[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.