

# A BIBLICAL APPROACH TO *FORGIVENESS*

*by BRYAN ELLIOTT • from MORE THAN GOLD*

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We all have people to forgive. Family, friends, and strangers can hurt us intentionally or unintentionally. Sometimes we need to practice receiving forgiveness from God for the sins we have committed. Either way, the process of forgiveness is one we should be familiar with and practice regularly.

Hebrews 12:15 instructs: “See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.” The more we forgive (and let go of the resentment, anger, and bitterness that accompanies unforgiveness), the more we will grow spiritually and receive God’s promise of peace and joy.

Often, people are reluctant to forgive because they have confused forgiveness with trust. You can forgive someone who hurt you without trusting them again. Forgiveness is a gift. Trust is earned. If someone has broken trust, it may take years for them to earn it back. In fact, they may never earn it back! But that does not mean we should not forgive them. Paul commands us to forgive in Colossians 3:13, “Bear with each

other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.”

Consider the steps on the following pages to guide you through the forgiveness process. Lean on God and His Word to lead you and give you strength each step of the way.

## *STEPS TO FORGIVENESS*

- 1.* Acknowledge your pain. If you need to, write down what happened and be honest about your emotions.
- 2.* Imagine being in the shoes of the person who hurt you. Remember how God forgave you and commands you to forgive others.
- 3.* Forgive the person who hurt you.
- 4.* Let go of your pain and determine to move forward in your thoughts and life.
- 5.* Pray for the person who hurt you, as Jesus commands us to in Matthew 5:44.
- 6.* Forgiveness can be a process. Continue to forgive as emotions or thoughts come up.

Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. However, feelings can be an indicator of your level of forgiveness. Ultimately, the choice to forgive is not about whether the person deserves it or even if the other person will participate in the exchange (sometimes it's better and safer if they don't!). God requires us to forgive.

Forgiveness brings healing and freedom. The Bible tells us our war is not against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities. It doesn't mean the person is not responsible or accountable for their choices, but we must know who the real enemy is. God is the ultimate judge; we are not. Our choice to forgive reflects our deeper choice to align with the kingdom of heaven.

Forgiveness must be specific. Forgiveness should include specifics on what your offenders have done and how they made you feel. Choose to forgive your offenders in specific areas and then speak peace and blessing over them, declaring your freedom from bondage and bitterness in Jesus' name.

Forgive from your heart. True forgiveness puts God in His rightful place as the King of our hearts

and lives. By choosing not to forgive, we give the person we hold bitterness toward control over our emotions and thoughts. If you are struggling to forgive, ask the Holy Spirit to remove any unrighteous anger, resentment, bitterness, and judgement from your heart and replace it with compassion.

Forgiveness ends in blessing. Remember to bless whoever hurt you. Blessing softens our hearts and brings healing to them and to us, opening the door for God to move. Jesus said to bless those who curse you!

## *ADDITIONAL RESOURCES*

This resource is from Bryan Elliott's book, *More than Gold*. Bryan is the President and co-founder of M46 Ministries along with his daughter, Bryn Elliott. Their mission is to inspire, disciple, and bring hope to the nations.

Find more resources at **[m46ministries.com](https://m46ministries.com)**