

## Chapter 5

### Forgiveness

In order to walk in the free and abundant life that Christ provides for us we must understand forgiveness. At the end of the Lord's prayer, Jesus tells the disciples an amazing thing. He says, "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions."

This is a difficult passage to understand. One thing is for sure, Jesus wants us to understand how important it is to forgive others. In this session we will extend to others forgiveness because we have also been forgiven (Ephesians 4:32). We will forgive others so that Satan cannot take advantage of our unforgiveness (2 Corinthians 2:10-11).

It is important to understand that forgiving is not forgetting. We forgive others so that we can be free from our pain and our past. Forgiving does not remove the pain but it is the first step to healing. You choose to forgive then God begins to heal you. We do not forget the painful events of our past, as God can use them to testify to others. However, we do choose not to use them against those who hurt us.

Forgiving others is agreeing to let God deal with the ones who hurt you. It sets us free from feeling the need to pay them back. When we choose to forgive, we surrender our rights to repay. We leave them in God's hands and release them from ours. No matter how much you were hurt by someone you can choose to forgive him or her. It is a decision of the will to obey God and forgive others.

Use the following prayer to ask God to reveal to you the names of those you need to forgive. If you don't know their names then identify them in some way, such as that one kid in grade school, God knows them. Keep praying until no one else comes to mind.

**Dear Lord, please bring to mind anyone that I need to forgive. I recognize that You have forgiven me and that I must forgive others. I want to be free from the bondage of my bitterness. In Jesus' name, amen.**

List each name here.

**Once your list is complete, you need to put yourself on the list. There may be things you need to forgive yourself for that you have not dealt with. You also need to put thoughts about God on the list. God has never done anything wrong but we may hold things against Him.**

You now can begin the process of forgiving each person on the list. To completely forgive you must reach down to the agony and emotional pain that each person inflicted on you. If you do not reach the pain then your forgiveness will be incomplete. Denying or avoiding the pain prevents you from fully realizing what the effects were, and can prevent you getting free or from fully forgiving the person. Take your list and next to each name write the things they did to you that need to be forgiven. You must allow the pain to come to the surface so God can begin His gentle healing process. Stay with each person until you have dealt with every issue of forgiveness. You are choosing to forgive now. The healing may take time but the freedom from the bitterness comes now.

**Dear Lord, I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_. This caused me to feel \_\_\_\_\_.**

Repeat this prayer for each offense and continue until you have completely forgiven each person. Once you are finished with a person on your list, use the following prayer to bless them.

**Dear Lord, I ask that you bless \_\_\_\_\_. I thank You for setting me free from my pain and my bitterness towards \_\_\_\_\_. I will no longer hold these things against \_\_\_\_\_. In Jesus' name, amen.**