

# RECONCILING, HEALING & THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

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## 1. Identify what causes conflict? (do some homework before you're in the situation)

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. **James 4:1-2**

*Normal* Stuff—finances, kids, disciplining, time management, driving, sex...

*Past* Stuff—hurts before marriage, hurts during marriage, mistrust, outlaws...

*Stress* Stuff—pressure at work, at home, deadlines, taxes...

*Personality & gender* stuff—temperament, differences, approaches to adversity...

*Sinful* Stuff—selfishness, anger, sex, porn, lies...

## 2. Assess what causes escalation? (know yourself, know your spouse, know your triggers)

A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense. **Proverbs 19:11**

Exploders and stuffers and passive-aggressive                      External-verbal and Internal processing

Own who you are and how you tend to react, and choose to grow up.

Where there is sin in your reactions to conflict, repent, ask for forgiveness, humble yourself!

## 3. Catch an escalating conflict before it goes into orbit!

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. **James 1:19-20**

The Self-Time-Out                      Slow down the interaction                      Anger is a choice

Tell what's going on in you (avoiding the accusative "you")

## 4. When you fail, humble yourself and reconcile

...your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended... See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. **2 Corinthians 7:9-11**

Humble yourself (part of dying to yourself) (Col. 3:12; 1 Peter 5:5-6; James 4:10)

Be sorry and Express it... "*I'm sorry*"

Admit your wrong... "*I was wrong*"

Ask for forgiveness... "*would you please forgive me.*"

Make restitution... "*is there anything I can do to make this right*"

Sometimes, give an explanation of what was going on inside you "*this is not an excuse, because there is no excuse for I did/said. I was feeling threatened, and lashed out. I'm not sure exactly why, but those were the feelings inside me...*"

"...if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift." **Matthew 5:23-24**

## 5. The need to forgive (a rationale)

“...when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.” **Mark 11:25** (Matthew 6:12, 14-15; 1 Cor. 13:5)

Forgiving somehow works hand in hand with receiving forgiveness

It actually hurts your relationship with God when you do not forgive

“Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” **Colossians 3:13**

Forgiving is a sign of a maturing, and increasingly free life

“And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. “My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.” **Matthew 18:34–35** NASB95

We invite torment into our lives by withholding forgiveness, invite freedom by forgiving.

## 6. Learning how to forgive

### ◆ Ask God to help you. You will need it!

### ◆ **Confess the feelings of hurt, anger, and bitterness out loud to God**

Psalms 52; 53; 58; 59; 35; 69; 70; 83; 109; 137:7-9

*Two modes can be effective:*

To be honest to God with all the hatred, anger, vengeance and the like emptying our hearts before him of the poison inside. (Psalm 58) “*God, this is terrible. I hate them! I wish they would... and that...*”

To speak to the person as if they are there, in the presence of God, and vent all the feelings out until they are done. (Psalm 52; 58; 10:2ff; ) (a less-vocal approach is to write a scathing letter and never mail it) “*You filthy slime-sucking maggot, ... etc.*”

Remember, they are NOT there for this!

### ◆ **Choose to forgive the person for *specific* offenses until done.**

Matthew 6:12, 14-15; 18:15-35; Colossians 3:13

Forgiveness is a choice, but sometimes you need to prime the pump (the will) to get to truly releasing the hurts, grievances, etc. Therefore, use the phrase “*For \_\_\_\_\_, I choose to forgive you, and for \_\_\_\_\_, I choose to forgive you. (sigh...)*” and let the bitterness, and pain go.

Be as specific as possible. The more specific the confession the more thorough the cleansing experienced

### ◆ **Ask God to forgive you for harboring bitterness specifically**

1 John 1:9

“*Father, I see now, just how deeply I have sinned against you and \_\_\_\_\_, and I am guilty before you. Please forgive me. I have harbored murder in my heart toward \_\_\_\_\_, ....*”

### ◆ **Speak blessing over the person whom you forgave.**

Luke 6:28; Romans 12:14; 1 Cor. 4:12

“*Lord, I speak my blessing over \_\_\_\_\_. I pray that you would bless them, and give them extra grace. And, that you would help me to reconcile with them soon...*”