



Session 4

Tool #3: Forgiveness

In session one we introduced three kinds of wounds.

- **A**bsence – You may need to forgive someone for what you didn't get from them.
- **B**ad – You may need to forgive something as simple as a tone of voice.
- **C**omparison/Perspective – You may need to forgive because of how your perception of life is making you feel (especially perceptions rooted in comparison).

Wherever there is pain – whether they mean to cause pain or not – I need to forgive them so that I can walk in freedom.

What does forgiveness mean?

As the story of the ex-marine illustrates, forgiveness does not mean there are no consequences. In *The Steps to Freedom in Christ*, Neil T. Anderson writes,

We are all living with the consequences of someone else's sin. The only choice is to do so in the bondage of bitterness or in the freedom of forgiveness.¹

Forgiveness is hard because it feels unjust. It feels like we are letting people get away with their actions without any consequences. However, the question is not, "What is justice?" but "Whose job is justice?"

Forgiveness is handing the job of justice over to God.

What forgiveness does NOT mean

Forgiveness is not all there is to emotional healing. In this series alone we have looked at four tools that are involved in the process. But many people worry that if they don't feel better when they choose to forgive that they have done it wrong.

¹ Neil T. Anderson, *The Steps to Freedom in Christ* (Grand Rapids: Bethany House, 1990, 2017) p. 11.





- Forgiveness is not **F**orgetting.
- Forgiveness is not **R**econciling.
- Forgiveness is not about **E**motion.
- Forgiveness is not about **E**xplaining/excusing.

Forgiveness is cancelling a debt.

- Matthew 18 describes how unforgiveness can lead to torment.
- One Greek word for forgiveness also means to loose. To forgive is to loose ourselves from bondage.
- Forgiveness gives us a key to unlock the chains of bitterness that keep us ensnared.

How do we forgive?

Sample Prayer

God, I choose to forgive ____ for doing ____ and making me feel _____ and creating the following consequences: _____.

The ABCs of forgiving

- **A**ccept the consequences.

I accept the consequences of what has happened to me and ask for Your grace to deal with them. I trust You to work all things together for good in my life.

- **B**less the offender.

I bless this person and ask You to do something good for them.

- **C**ommit to the Collection Agency.

I commit this person's debt to the Kingdom of God Collection Agency. If there is anything left to collect, I give that job to You.

Forgiveness is an act of obedience in which we are entrusting our pain to God, asking Him to take care of justice, and trusting that He really can work all things together for good and that He promises to do so.

