

The ABC-D. of Forgiveness

Forgiving others for the real and deep hurts of life

Admit the reality of the past:

1. Pray for accurate memory.
2. Who hurt you?
3. How deeply are you hurt?
4. Which situation will be your focus?
5. What actually happened? (Be specific)
6. Is there legitimate “excuse” for the other person’s actions?

Be Aware of your present anger:

1. Pray for insight and honesty.
2. Do I still think about the offense often?
3. Do I think the offense changed my life for the worse?
4. Do I still feel the hurt and anger when I think about it?
5. How have I dealt with my hurt and anger in the past?
 - Denial? I wasn’t really hurt or I can get over this!
 - Revenge? I will punish him/her at every opportunity.

Choose to forgive:

1. Pray that God’s Spirit will change your heart. (Ephesians 3:14-19)
2. Review the basis of forgiveness
 - Forgiveness is an undeserved act of grace. (Isaiah 43:25; Romans 5:8)
 - Forgiveness is based on justice; Jesus suffered for their offense. (1 John 2:2)
 - I am forgiven by God! (Jeremiah 31:31; 1 John 1:9)
3. Get perspective on your offender
 - Imagine or describe what life was like for them earlier in their life.
 - Describe what life was like for them at the time of the offense.
 - Describe your relationship with the person other than the offense.
 - Describe what your relationship with the person could be if the offense was removed.
4. Make a decision. Am I willing to begin to forgive or do I wish to hold on to my “right” to retaliate?

Do it!

1. Pray that God will enable you to persevere.
2. Write a letter granting forgiveness.
 - You may or may not send the letter depending on circumstances.
 - Be specific about the offense and the hurt; how you have responded to the hurt in the past; the basis of the forgiveness; and your decision; ending with a forthright statement of forgiveness.
3. Take control of your thoughts – refusing to re-live the hurt and continually choosing to forgive.
4. Take positive steps of compassion and affirmation toward the offender.

Ephesians 4:32 “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, **just as** in Christ God forgave you.

Acknowledgement:

Some of the above is taken from an excellent secular book by Robert Enright entitled Forgiveness is a Choice, May 2001, published by APA Lifetools. I can't remember from whom I stole the rest.

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