

(From Resolving Everyday Conflict Participant Guide)

1. What "power" did the young man in the video seem to be holding on to by withholding forgiveness? How do you think this will eventually come back to haunt him?
2. Why does it seem easier to forgive someone who apologizes versus the person who refuses to acknowledge that he or she did anything wrong?
3. What is the primary difference between forgiveness and reconciliation?
4. Why do you think it's important to identify and assign value to the losses someone has created in your life before you can move toward forgiving him or her?
5. How can an unwillingness to move toward forgiveness affect our relationship with God?
6. In what sense can our spiritual health be measured by the health of our relationships (even with those with whom we are in conflict)?
7. Under what circumstances can "asking for forgiveness" actually be manipulative? What needs to happen to prevent that question from being abused?
8. In what sense does forgiveness mean transferring a debt that someone has created in your life to "God's repayment plan"? What options does your offender have to address that debt—once it only exists between him and God?
9. How does believing that God will have the final word in all matters of injustice make it easier for us to move toward forgiving someone who has hurt us—especially those who remain remorseless?
10. Does forgiving someone necessarily mean that you must trust that person again? Explain.
11. Give some examples of where genuine forgiveness has taken place, but trust is wisely kept at a minimum.
12. Give some examples of where it would be appropriate to increase your willingness to trust someone on the basis of his or her penitent words & actions.
13. What does rebuilding trust look like? What's required for that to happen?
14. How do you know when you've forgiven someone?
15. Is there someone in your life whom you need to forgive? If so, where are you in that process? What do you need to do to move forward?

GO and Be Reconciled

Matthew 5:23-24 tells us to initiate reconciliation with others. We have already unpacked what comes before forgiveness in giving a proper apology, repentance, making right personal and material wrongs as much as possible. But forgiveness has two parts and reconciliation is the goal—not always the end result. This Sunday, we unpack what forgiveness is and is not which is entirely counter-cultural, just like Jesus.

Review: In dealing well with conflict there are four "G"s

1. GLORIFY GOD—1 Corinthians 10:31 *So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

How can I please and honor God in this situation?

- Understanding the Slippery Slope
- Glory of God is a Human fully alive.

2. GET THE LOG OUT OF YOUR EYE—Matthew 7:5 *You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from the other person's eye.*

How can I show Jesus' work in me by taking responsibility for my contribution to this conflict?

Progression of an Idol. Demand, Desire, Disappointment, Judge, Punish

- (Smith's) We are fundamentally desiring/loving creatures. Our desires are directed by habit.
- Reconciliation cannot occur between parties without repentance, apology and new behaviour. You can forgive but reconciliation is impossible.
- When you are the offender - learn a proper apology - 7 "A"s

3. GENTLY RESTORE—Galatians 6:1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.

How can I lovingly serve others by helping them take responsibility for their contribution to this conflict?

4. GO AND BE RECONCILED—Matthew 5:24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First, go and be reconciled to that person; then come and offer your gift.

How can I demonstrate the forgiveness of God and encourage a reasonable solution to this conflict?

FORGIVENESS OPENS THE WAY FOR RECONCILIATION

Key principles:

1. FORGIVE, AS GOD FORGAVE YOU

Forgiveness is a decision modelled after God's forgiveness of us.
Colossians 3:13, Ephesians 4:32

2. YOU CANNOT DO IT ALONE

3. NOT A FEELING, NOR FORGETTING, NOR EXCUSING

EXCURSUS: Keep in mind that sometimes we feel wronged when the other person did not sin against us which requires emotional maturity to work through our feelings of pride, etc.

4. FORGIVENESS IS A DECISION

FORGIVENESS IS COSTLY.

2 Corinthians 2:7-10, 1 Peter 2:24-25

We are like God most when we forgive:

Isaiah 52:1-2, Romans 6:23, Psalm 103:12, Psalm 130:3-4

FORGIVENESS INVOLVES FOUR PROMISES:

I will not dwell on this incident

I will not bring up this incident against and use it against you

I will not talk to others about this incident

I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship

KIDS:

Good Thought

Hurt you not

Gossip never

Friends forever

5. WHEN SHOULD YOU FORGIVE?

Having an ATTITUDE of forgiveness *Luke 6:28*
GRANTING forgiveness

6. CAN YOU EVER MENTION THE SIN AGAIN?

7. WHAT ABOUT CONSEQUENCES?

8. OVERCOMING UNFORGIVENESS

Confirm Repentance

Renounce Sinful Attitudes and Expectations

Assess Your Contributions to the Problem

Recognize That God is Working For Good

Remember God's Forgiveness

Draw On God's Strength

9. RECONCILIATION AND THE REPLACEMENT PRINCIPLE

1. In Thought

2. In Word

3. In Deed

FINAL WORD