

Published based on [Forgiveness - The Hardest Thing You'll Ever Do](#)

# **Forgiveness - The Hardest Thing You'll Ever Do**



Forgiveness is hard. Forgiving an offender is hard. Let's just cut through the religiousness we hide behind and tell the truth. It is hard. Oh, not so much when someone cuts us off in traffic or steals that parking place we had our eye on. We can move on pretty quickly when the offense is not relational. But it is in relationships that we have the potential to be hurt, offended, betrayed, and find ourselves with a heart struggling to forgive (and it is in relationships that we also have the potential to hurt others, offend others, betray others. As a matter of fact, all, and I do mean all, relationships must deal with this issue.)Whether it is words spoken or the lack or words spoken when we needed them, actions taken or the lack of actions taken, or the million other ways we can be hurt, at times we all find ourselves at times in the position of having a major offense in our hearts that needs to be dealt with.

We Christians build our faith on Christ forgiving us for our sins. Most of us know what the Word says

about forgiveness. It's not for babies. *You won't be forgiven if you don't forgive. Your lack of*

*forgiveness allows "the tormentors" to access your life.* On and on we could go. God doesn't give us

any wiggle room on the issue, but yet we all find ourselves struggling. How do we overcome?

I used to have a nice, neat package answer on this then entered OFFENSE 601, the graduate course. I didn't even sign-up for it and yet I found myself enrolled, as if it were some sort of required class. More tests than I could even begin to count. I passed some, failed many, and gradually got a grade of Incomplete in the course. But then God reactivated my class status. He has a way of doing that, you know! When we tuck things down inside, allowing them to lie dormant, or so we think, God has a way of bringing them back to the surface. Something happens to remind us of the offense. The emotions

spring back up. Alas, back to the old adage, "Things buried alive never die."

But God, who is committed to our wholeness, has great dredging equipment. He dredges up the "stuff". And we can't escape. We come face to face with our pain again. What is a believer to do? What are the truths we need to know about forgiveness? I will offer a few today, and I plan to write more on this in the next few days because I can't possibly cover it all today so know that this is a part one of a series. I offer them as suggestions from a heart that acknowledges my own weakness, my humanness, my Incomplete grade on the course, but I offer them in my own pursuit of wholeness and in

the hope and belief that they might help others.

1. Forgiveness is a process. It is complicated. If we are real about the hard stuff, we must all admit

that we are unable in our humanness to deal the death blow to offense in one broad stroke. I have said before that we choose to forgive, and yes, that is true. We choose, but truthfully that choice is the beginning step. It is a necessary step, but it is only a beginning step that places us on the track of healing. Great offense requires that we choose again and again and again and again. When our buried alive emotions fly out of their grave, we must choose again to access God's grace and forgive.

2. When we think of forgiveness, we tend to view it as one person or group or family that has been wronged by another. However, relationships are much more complicated than that. More often than not, both sides carry a measure of the "blame".

3. There is a difference in a heart that vows never to forgive an offense and a heart that acknowledges its struggle to forgive but desires to. The process of forgiveness can be a real process that is happening in our hearts and coexists with our struggling emotions. God works with us in our weaknesses. Each step towards healing, however incomplete, is important.

4. The process of forgiveness requires us to feel – our losses, our grief, our hatreds – whether they be toward ourselves or others. The process of forgiveness confronts our hearts with our emotions, and this is very important. We are less than truthful when we deny the authenticity of our feelings. Acknowledging those emotions does open the door on the path of allowing healing to come into those places. I was recently troubled by a statement someone made to me about their recent hurt. "It's really okay," they said and then they offered their reasons on why it was no big deal. And it was a lie. It was a big deal, but they "needed" emotionally to just push it away, deny its pain. That is inauthentic and distances us from the

grace of God which comes to heal us when we

are able to admit our pain.

5. Perhaps the greatest temptation is to begin to see the offender(s) as all evil. We humans love black and white thinking. All evil or all good. If we can view a person as completely evil, it is easier to deny the need to deal with our pain. If they are all evil, then it doesn't matter that they hurt me. As we process through our forgiveness issues, we learn to accept our own humanity and the humanity of others. When we view others as all good or all bad, we are, in reality, refusing to acknowledge anything bad about ourselves (for surely we are all good and our offender is all bad). The more mature view, which I do not altogether possess, is that there is a person or a group of people who has hurt us, but yet that person or that group has good qualities as well as the bad ones which are highlighted in our feelings. It is the higher road to be able to say, "They really hurt me and wronged me, but there was a time when we had a good relationship. I still can remember the good about that person in the midst of

this very hurtful situation."

That's enough to chew on today. I'll post more thoughts in the next couple of days, but for now let me say, stay in the process. It will be the hardest thing you'll ever do, but in doing so, you will gain more of

God's heart as you humbly acknowledge your own. Forgiveness is a great key to freedom, use it!

You can also find this article published on [Forgiveness - The Hardest Thing You'll Ever Do](#), and on the tag pages [forgiveness](#), [offense](#), [Relationships](#).