

## **What Forgiveness is Not**

- 1. Denying that we are in pain.**
- 2. Saying forget it. Saying “I am over it. It doesn’t matter ” is not forgiveness.**
- 3. Conditional i.e. “ I will forgive you if...”**
- 4. Forcing children to forgive and make up, may lead to more unforgiveness, not less.**
- 5. Quick or easy.**
- 6. Displacement of a hurt on to someone else or something else. I’m mad at the dog, not a person.**
- 7. To help the other person. It really only helps us and may not affect another at all.**

## **Forgiveness is**

- 1. Specific- I forgive this person for this act, deed or words, etc.**
- 2. Rooted in some feeling or emotion or memory. Eventually we need to get to that root and uproot it.**
- 3. God given. God alone can get to the root or end of unforgiveness. To forgive really is divine! We need God’s help.**
- 4. Generalized- when I forgive one person for one thing, God can graciously extend that healing to many more people or hurts in me.**
- 5. A decision made with your intellect and will. God will give you the grace to forgive a person, place or thing.**
- 6. Our willingness to pray for the offender, to come to that person’s spiritual aid, to treat them with respect.**

## **The Process of Forgiveness**

**A process that takes time, because unforgiveness has grown over time.**

**This process has many steps:**

**Someone hurts us by word, look or action. This can be physical, emotional, spiritual or verbal.**

- 1. We are confused or bewildered by the hurt. There is shock or a physical reaction e.g. angers, getting red, stammering, etc. This is of short duration.**
- 2. We bury the hurt deep (and deeper) as time goes on.**
- 3. We use substitutes to forget and ignore the hurt, e.g. drugs, alcohol, avoiding certain subjects, people, and places.**
- 4. We deny we are hurting. This could go on for days, or even years.**
- 5. We become discouraged because our denial does not work.**

6. **We discover the truth through prayer, therapy, a friend, etc.**
7. **We take responsibility for our part of unforgiveness.**
8. **We pray for the root, the effects, and the results of the unforgiveness to be healed.**
9. **We are restored to spiritual health and healing by acknowledging the hurt and dealing with it.**

#### **Results of unforgiveness**

1. **Bodily hurts and symptoms- everything from a head cold to cancer, headache to back ache.**
2. **Stressed or broken relationships.**
3. **Emotional blocks or deficits.**
4. **Verbal anger or repression (tight lips, displaced anger) etc.**
5. **Spiritual anger at God, self and others.**

#### **Healthy Ways to Come to Forgiveness Never hurt yourself or another**

1. **Art - draw anger- words or picture express anger in a healthy way. Then rip it up.**
2. **Hate Letters - write anger in a letter - be very specific and direct - Never send! Instead, rip them up.**
3. **Play dough or clay - sculpt your anger and beat it to a pulp!**
4. **Write name of people on your shoe soles and walk on them until name disappears.**
5. **Hit pillows on couch or sofa.**
6. **Scream or yell in the car, or yell while you are at home alone.**
7. **Rip up old phone books.**
8. **Nerf balls and plastic bats or golf club- use them to hit something soft.**
9. **Clench and unclench fists- until your arm gets tired.**
10. **Exercise- walking, running, swimming etc.**
11. **Gardening with vigor.**