

beg you to be at peace with God. 2  
Corinthians 5:18-20 (NCV)

### WHO MUST I FORGIVE?

- ❑ **Sunday – I must forgive myself.** Take some time today and forgive yourself for your failures. Write out a list of things you have yet to forgive yourself about. Then, audibly say, “I forgive myself for this failure of \_\_\_\_\_.” Repeat this process until you have covered your whole list.
- ❑ **Monday – I must forgive my spouse.** Living in close proximity to another provides multitudes of opportunities to forgive. Take some time to first think through the most recent or greatest hurts and then go to your spouse and simply say, “Dear \_\_\_\_\_, I forgive you for \_\_\_\_\_.” Repeat the process throughout the week as items come to mind. *Employ the seventy times seven principle here!*
- ❑ **Tuesday – I must forgive my children.** All too often our children do foolish and hurtful things and say things that deeply wound us. Today take time and forgive your children. They might be grown and in another city. Simply grant them the grace you seek from God each day. Communicate your forgiveness to them today by telling them, “All is forgiven. I love you.”
- ❑ **Wednesday – I must forgive my family.** In-laws and out-laws can bring real tension to our lives. Holidays become tortured times for those with broken relationships. Today is the opportunity to slather the mercy of Jesus upon every family member who has brought injury to your heart. Pick up the phone and let them know you have forgiven them and love them today.
- ❑ **Thursday – I must forgive my friends.** It has been said we often hurt the ones we love. Good friendships deserve liberal amounts compassion and understanding. You will need forgiveness very soon from another. Give and it will be given to you! Take a moment and summon the sacrificial

love of Jesus and call that friend and forgive them today.

- ❑ **Friday – I must forgive my neighbors.** We live in a world of selfish and feuding neighbors. “*Love your neighbor,*” is Jesus’ command to us. Love begins with forgiveness. Forgive them for their injuries against you. Use Jesus’ words here, “*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*” Then, swallow your pride and anger and walk over to their door and ask for their forgiveness for your failures and offenses as well.
- ❑ **Saturday – I must forgive my enemies.** Here is where true Christ-followers shine. Take a few minutes and admit you have enemies. Name them on a piece of paper. Write out their attacks upon you – whether at work or in the community. Then, one by one, forgive each person of each offense. Begin to pray for a heart of love towards that person.

**We have all went through betrayals of trust, rejection, lies and insults.** Jesus calls us, as his followers and as the children of God, to act differently. He calls us to pray ...

*Forgive us for our sins, just as we have forgiven those who sinned against us. Matthew 6:12 (NCV)*

**This week is a great time to start the process in earnest!**

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## **A Week of Forgiveness**

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## **National Forgiveness Week**

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**Forgiveness** is a uniquely Christ-like thing to do! It is the essential quality to living a life of joy and pleasure. When we are forgiving, we are no longer trapped in prisons of pain. We no longer live in the past – at the event of hurt – but are free to move forward into a future of happiness and possibility.

**This week is National Forgiveness Week.** What an appropriate week to shine the love of Jesus by forgiving those who have wounded us! We can define forgiveness is two ways ... One is relinquishing bitterness or vengeance, and the second is adopting a merciful response towards the offender -- finding even a small way in which you can genuinely wish good for the offender.

**Forgiveness is something the Bible calls us to give before someone asks for it.** We model our Lord on the cross, when He said of His murderers ...

*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. Luke 23:34 (ASV)*

### CLARITY ABOUT FORGIVENESS

- ❑ Forgiveness is not conditional, it is unconditional. It is undeserved and cannot be bargained for, just as Jesus' forgiveness is of each one of us.
- ❑ Having said that, we also understand that forgiveness doesn't minimize the seriousness of the offense against us. The offense is a big deal. However, we also must distinguish between the accidental affront that hurts us, which we accept as the inevitable reality of any relationship versus the intentional offense meant to injure us, which we must forgive as a follower of Jesus.
- ❑ Forgiveness does not mitigate the consequences of the offense. If someone has murdered my spouse, I must forgive them as a follower of Jesus, but I cannot stop the prosecution by the State. When justice requires a payment for the crimes of another against us, forgiveness does not remove the cost.
- ❑ Forgiveness is not resuming a relationship

without changes once we give it. We have to understand the difference between forgiveness and restoration. Forgiveness is instant. Restoration takes a lot of time. When someone desires to be restored to their previous level within our trust they need to demonstrate genuine repentance, make restitution and rebuild their trustworthiness by proving they have changed over time. Forgiveness is by grace and is to be granted immediately. Trust has to be earned and takes a lot of time to restore.

- ❑ Forgiveness is not forgetting what happened. We simply cannot forget deep wounds and injuries. We remember the offense and, once we forgive, we begin to watch for the ways God will turn this injury into good, just as the Bible promises (Romans 8.28). God loves turning crucifixions into resurrections!
- ❑ And finally, forgiveness is not my right when I was not the one who was hurt. Many people "grant forgiveness" to others *in the place of another*. I can no more grant forgiveness for someone who injured you as you can do so to someone who has hurt me. Only the victim has the right to forgive.

### WHY MUST I FORGIVE?

- ❑ **Because God has forgiven me!** *You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Colossians 3:13 (NLT) You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ. He forgave all our sins. He canceled the record that contained the charges against us. He took it and destroyed it by nailing it to Christ's cross. Colossians 2:13-14 (NLT) I never have to forgive others more than God forgave me.*
- ❑ **Because resentment controls you!** *You are only hurting yourself with your anger. Job 18.4 (TEV) Resentment won't correct anything. It is unreasonable because we do childish things*

as a result. Resentment is unhealthy, in fact it is worse than guilt according to research!

- ❑ **Because I will need more forgiveness in the future!** *Jesus said, For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. Matthew 6:14-15 (NIV) Forgiveness is a two-way street. What we want from God we must give to others.*

### HOW DO I FORGIVE?

- ❑ **By relinquishing my right to get even.** *Dear friends, never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God, for he has said that he will repay those who deserve it. Don't take the law into your own hands. Romans 12:19 (TLB)*
- ❑ **By responding to evil with good.** *Jesus told us, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. Luke 6:27-28 (NIV) When you have forgiven them, you can pray for God's blessings upon them.*
- ❑ **By repeating these steps as long as necessary.** *Then Peter came to [Jesus] and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" "No!" Jesus replied, "seventy times seven! Matthew 18:21-22 (NLT) Every time you remember the hurt, you forgive them again!*
- ❑ **By rescuing others with the good news of God's forgiveness.** *All this is from God. Through Christ, God made peace between us and himself, and God gave us the work of telling everyone about the peace we can have with him. God was in Christ, making peace between the world and himself. In Christ, God did not hold the world guilty of its sins. And he gave us this message of peace. So we have been sent to speak for Christ. It is as if God is calling to you through us. We speak for Christ when we*