

FORGIVENESS EXERCISE

This exercise will take some time, and it may stir up weighty emotions. Take your time and know that this work will have a lasting impact on your physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

1. Take some time to pray, asking God to reveal to you a list of people who have offended you, sinned against you, or hurt you. As people come to mind, write their names below.

2. Beside each name you listed, note the offenses, sins, and hurts.

3. Write down messages you received about yourself—feelings or beliefs associated with your self-image—as a result of those offenses, sins, and hurts.

4. Determine what, if anything, these people owe you and write it down (e.g., your time, a happy childhood, etc.).

5. Take time to acknowledge the pain each person caused you. Give yourself permission to feel hurt, angry, or sad. Forgiveness is a choice of the will, and you will still grieve. Grieving is important. There is healing that will continue beyond the moment of forgiveness.

6. Forgive these people by declaring that they owe you nothing further, releasing the right to see them change, and accepting them as they are. It is okay to ask God for help with this process. We often can't forgive people through our own efforts and need God to help us truly forgive those that have hurt us. If it helps you, write out your forgiveness declaration in the space provided.



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7. When you are finished with the exercise, tear up or burn your list. This represents how you're choosing not to hold people accountable for what they owe you.

No one deserves forgiveness. But God chose to forgive us, and forgiveness is something we can offer, even when people don't deserve it. By identifying specifically how someone hurt us, we can pinpoint exactly what we are forgiving. Forgiveness is the door we must walk through in order to experience true peace and freedom.