

Study B: Forgiving Others

“And when you stand praying, forgive, if you hold anything against anyone, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”
John 14:15

Why: Reasons for the study

- People in crisis are often bitter and angry at someone and have a need to forgive.
- Disciples usually won't progress very far if they are harboring unforgiveness or bitterness in their heart.
- Even more mature Christians often have not been specific in forgiving and usually experience greater freedom in doing this exercise of obedience.

What: Principles to grasp

- God commands us to forgive; it is not an option.
- Forgiveness is a decision of the will and a commitment – not a process over time.
- The fruit of the commitment to forgive is being freed from bitterness and healed from the hurt, which is produced by the Holy Spirit in His timing.
- Suppression is Satan's counterfeit.
- There are warnings and consequences for not forgiving.
- The more specific we are in identifying the specific things to forgive, the more freedom is experienced from the bitterness and hurt.
- There is a body-life dynamic in forgiving with a witness that God often uses to bring greater freedom.

How: Path to a changed life

- Understand God doesn't excuse sinful responses to offenders' sins.
- Learn to forgive; to “act” on their commitment by upholding their 3-fold commitment and renewing their minds.
- Continue to forgive because they will be sinned against until the day they die!

Tips: Helpful ideas

- Be thorough in expanding their forgiveness list. Realize you may get resistance.
- Explain the *Positional vs. Fellowship Relationship* diagram.
- Explain when to use *1-5 Memory Outline vs. Renewing Your Mind Outline*.
To avoid confusion, assign *1-5 Memory Outline* after they have memorized *Renewing Your Mind Outline* and are practicing it.
- Have disciple memorize the five key words in *Renewing Your Mind Outline* for acting on their commitment to forgive, as well as other sinful thoughts.
- Note: If your disciple continues to refuse to prepare or pray through forgiveness lists, CTO may not be the best approach for them at this time. (See *Helping A Disciple Forgive Others* - online)

Tools and additional resources:

- For discipler: *Helping a Disciple Forgive Others; Expanding a Forgiveness List* (ctousa.org/resources/helping a disciple...)
- For disciple: *Forgiveness Checklist* to prepare for forgiving each person (ctousa.org/resources/checklists)
- *Serving Each Other Through Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, Tim Keller (gospelinlife.com)