

How Forgiveness Works (Youth)

▫ www.pursuegod.org/how-forgiveness-works-youth/

Forgiveness is an important skill for life. Maybe you have never thought about forgiveness that way, but if you don't know how to forgive others, life will be miserable. People are going to hurt you and let you down, and you need to know how to forgive. Also, if you are a Christian, God commands you to forgive others.

So, what do we need to understand about how forgiveness works?

Train yourself to forgive others

People aren't naturally forgiving. When someone hurts us, we want to hurt them back. This means that if you don't think about forgiving someone until you have been hurt, it will be really hard to forgive them. This is why Jesus taught this about forgiveness:

Matthew 18:21-22 *Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!"*

Jesus is telling us that we need to plan on being a forgiving person. Even before someone hurts us, we need to choose to be a person who forgives, and not a person who is bitter. Make a decision now, before you're mad, that you will forgive people when they hurt you. Just like you have to train for a sport, you have to train yourself to forgive others.

Forgiveness means letting go

The Bible teaches us that if you really forgive someone, you no longer hold their wrong actions against them. When you forgive someone, you are releasing them from your feelings of anger or blame.

Romans 12:19 *Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD.*

When you forgive someone, you are promising that you won't take revenge on them, and you won't constantly remind them about what they did wrong. You haven't really forgiven someone if you keep bringing up how they hurt you in the past. True forgiveness is letting go of bitterness. It doesn't mean that you just trust someone who isn't trustworthy, but you are willing to no longer hold their wrong actions against them.

God requires us to forgive

Forgiveness is hard, especially when someone really hurts you. But God commands Christians to forgive, every time they are sinned against. How can God ask us to do this? It is because he has forgiven us for ALL of our sins.

Colossians 3:12-13 *Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the*

| *Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.*

If you are struggling to forgive someone, remember how God forgave you. We were separated from God because of our sin, and yet God still sent his Son to die in our place. That is true forgiveness! In the same way, we must forgive others. Forgiveness isn't easy, but with God's help we can always choose forgiveness.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

[Submit questions](#)

1. **Set Up:** Watch the video together or invite someone to [summarize the topic](#).
 2. What is harder: forgiving someone who hurt you, or asking for forgiveness? Why?
 3. Read [Matthew 18:21-22](#). What is the principle that Jesus is teaching about forgiveness in these verses?
 4. Read [Colossians 3:12-13](#). Why is it important to be ready to forgive people when they hurt you? How did God forgive us?
 5. How is being an unforgiving person dangerous for you?
 6. How would you help someone who is struggling to forgive a friend who hurt them?
 7. **Takeaway:** Write a [personal action step](#) based on this conversation.
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