

5 KEYS TO FORGIVENESS THAT LEADS TO HEALING

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Forgiveness can be a tricky subject to navigate. As Christians, we know in our hearts that offering forgiveness to others is the Christ-like thing to do and something that we are called to do through our relationship with Jesus. However, many times our head struggles with the why and how of the matter. Why should I forgive them? How do I forgive them? What they did is unforgivable. What do I say? Sometimes we aren't even aware that we need to forgive someone or we think we have done it, but then we continue to struggle. Here are 5 keys that can help you answer some of those questions and begin the journey of true forgiveness and healing in your life.

KEY #1: IS JESUS YOUR LORD?

Is Jesus your Lord? I often begin the first in a series of coaching sessions with this simple, yet profound question. Why, you might wonder? Why is this such an important question and what does it have to do with life coaching? Well, everything, actually. You see, the basis of spiritual healing depends on whether or not you are willing to accept Jesus as the Lord of your life; body, mind and spirit. One can only be successfully coached to the degree at which he/she is willing to be coachable, and by the same token, one can only be transformed spiritually to the degree at which he/she is willing to allow Jesus Lordship over their life.

Acts 2:36, Peter tells the people gathered before him, "Therefore let the whole house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified." ¹

The term "lord" is defined as "one having power and authority over others; a ruler by hereditary right or preeminence to whom service and obedience are due." ² If Jesus is your Lord, then, by very definition, you are declaring your willingness to follow Him and His commands, even when it may seem impossible or difficult.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church has this to say about the term "lord": "The Old Testament is written in Hebrew and the translation of the word YHWH, into Greek is "Kyrios" or "Lord". Lord

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Humans are complex creatures of God. The physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of our lives are interconnected and combine to make us who we are. Problems in any of these areas impact the others. As a Catholic Life Coach, I seek to help individuals improve their lives and find healing and transformation through a biblical process called Discipleship Deliverance. I also conduct group speaking engagements on a number of topics aimed at teaching key principles of faith that lead to spiritual healing.

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became the usual name that indicates the divinity for the title for both God the Father and Jesus, God the Son. Jesus spoke to his disciples in John 13:13 and said, ‘You call Me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, because I am.’” (CCC #446)³

Many times, forgiveness does, in fact, seem to be impossible, or at the very least difficult, and depending on the severity and circumstances of the offense, in the eyes of the law and the world, you may be rightfully justified in your hesitancy to grant such a valuable gift to someone who may not be “deserving.”

However, Jesus doesn’t just call us to forgive, He goes as far as to say that if you don’t, then you, yourself, won’t be forgiven. Wait, WHAT? Yep...you heard that right. In Matthew’s Gospel, 6:14-15, directly after He lays out the pattern of prayer that we know as the “Our Father,” Jesus tells His disciples, “If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions.”⁴

So whether forgiveness is something you find to be deeply challenging to even think about, or something that you don’t have to think twice about, when we approach forgiveness from the stance that Jesus is Lord, then no matter the degree of difficulty, forgiveness becomes, not about my feelings, but about my willingness to be obedient to God. This obedience is key to finding genuine healing through forgiveness.

1) <http://usccb.org/bible/acts/2#52002036-s>
2) <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/lord>
3) http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s2c2a2.htm (CCC #446)
4) <http://usccb.org/bible/matthew/6>

KEY #2: ASKING FOR HELP

Forgiveness can be an emotionally and spiritually difficult and complex task. Many people say, “oh yeah, I forgive them,” but most don’t actually know *how* to forgive and therefore, end up doing so in word only, but not to the fullest extent possible, the extent that brings about true transformation and healing; body, mind and spirit. As with many high-difficulty tasks, there is a learning curve involved and we need help from others to be able to accomplish the work. So, who do we ask? Of course, in the practical view of things, we can turn to a

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KEY #2 (CONT'D.)

skilled counselor or coach to help walk us through the process, but there is another level of help I am talking about here; the spiritual level. We can call out in prayer for help and intercession as we embark on a journey to forgiveness and healing.

First and foremost, we can turn to the ultimate example of forgiveness, Jesus. God the Son, not only instructed us about forgiveness in many of His teachings, He gave us the greatest example as He hung on the cross and cried out, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."⁵ We can pray and ask Jesus to help us forgive.

Secondly, we can ask for help from God, the Holy Spirit. In John's Gospel, 16:7-15, Jesus also told us about another who has come to help us, God the Holy Spirit, and the Catechism tells us more about the help of the Holy Spirit, who gives us grace: "But this same Spirit who brings sin to light is also the Consoler who gives the human heart grace of repentance and conversion." (John 15:26, Acts 2:36-38, John Paul II, DeV 27-48;

CCC #1433)⁶ Here we see that the Holy Spirit is a Helper to us, especially when we need to forgive others. We see this mystical revelation, through a personal relationship with the Holy Spirit, when we open our hearts and simply ask for His help. The Holy Spirit desires to reveal to us, not only about our personal sins, but He desires to help us show the love of God through forgiveness to others. We can call on the Holy Spirit to help us to be willing and able to forgive as Jesus calls us to forgive.

Third, we can call on Mary and the saints. In our prayers, we can ask for the intercession of Our Mother Mary and the saints to pray for us in our journey of forgiveness. In his address to the people, as he opened the Holy Door at the Basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome on January 1, 2016, Pope Francis referred to Mary as, "The Mother of forgiveness (who) teaches the Church that the forgiveness granted on Golgotha knows no limits..."⁷ Our Mother longs to see us live in the fullness of God's love and mercy and she knows just how to pray for us as we seek to fulfill His will in our lives. Calling on Mary to intercede for us as we seek to forgive

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"I began seeing Jansen because I was experiencing some disconnect in my life. I never was able to quite put my finger on it, but had some deep rooted problems with anxiety and fear that were buried deep inside of me. Jansen helped me discover this due to some childhood traumas that I had experienced.

After just two sessions, I was sleeping better and feeling more peace and joy. After the third session, I began to see drastic improvements in my relationship with God, my marriage, self esteem, my relationship with my children, and my career. Everything in my life just seemed to be getting better. Even my finances!

Discipleship Deliverance truly changed my life. This process allowed me to unlock God's purpose and destiny for me. Everything that blocked me from receiving the fullness of God's grace and love has been removed. Now I can live in the freedom of Christ's love. This allows me to live the life that God has planned for me. I'm truly grateful that the Lord heard my prayers and allowed a deep healing to take place in me- physically, emotionally, and spiritually."

S.S.- Catholic Wife, Mother, and Registered Nurse

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KEY #2 (CONT'D.)

can bring about great healing and transformation in our lives.

We can also call on the saints to pray for us. The first martyr, St. Stephen gives a powerful example of what it looks like to forgive. St. Stephen's fearless lifestyle of proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus was met with strong adversity, and the Apostles recorded his last words in Acts 7:20, as he was being stoned, to be, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them."⁸ St. Ignatius of Loyola, walked a hundred miles in the winter so that he could nurse a man who was ill. This man, only a few weeks earlier, had stolen Ignatius' meager life savings. St. Augustine said, "If you are suffering from a bad man's injustice, forgive him, lest there be two bad men." St. Philip of Zell had two thieves who stole his oxen. While they were trying to escape, they got lost and found themselves back in front of St. Philip's house, confused. When the saint emerged, he knew what they had done. The thieves begged for forgiveness and Philip forgave them and fixed them something to eat before letting them go. These examples show that forgiveness is a lifestyle and not simply a religious concept. We can find powerful help and direction when we seek the intercession of the saints as we walk toward forgiveness.

5) <http://uscgb.org/bible/luke/23>
6) http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p2s2c2a4.htm
7) <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/pope-francis-mary-is-the-mother-of-forgiveness-25646>
8) <http://uscgb.org/bible/acts/7>

KEY #3: UNDERSTAND THAT FORGIVENESS DOES NOT EQUATE TO CONDONING OR EXCUSING A PERSON'S ACTIONS

Many times people hesitate to offer forgiveness to those who have wronged them because they feel, or fear, that by doing so, they are in some way condoning the actions of the wrongdoer or saying that what they did is okay. If that is you, let me stop you right here and tell you clearly, that is absolutely not the goal, intention or meaning of true forgiveness. True forgiveness is more about you, your trust in God and your own healing than it is about the other person.

In an effort to help professionals and clients understand forgiveness, doctors Robert D. Enright, PhD and Richard P. Fitzgibbons, MD published a work entitled Helping Clients Forgive: An Empirical Guide for Resolving Anger and Restoring Hope. In this work, they write, "People, upon rationally determining that they have been unfairly treated,

WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP DELIVERANCE?

Most people come to Whole Catholic Coaching for reasons of deliverance (dealing with evil/demonic) and that can sometimes bring about visions of scary movies and "weird" religious practices. However, that is not what Discipleship Deliverance is at all! Rather than this looking like something straight out of the movies, I simply disciple people in the area of their personal stories.

Starting with a foundational teaching on forgiveness from Matthew 18, I walk individuals to examine four main areas needed to forgive.

Over thirty years of experience in this area has revealed that when a person authentically forgive, many times it brings about physical and emotional healing as well as clarity of direction in life and this is needed for the body of Christ!

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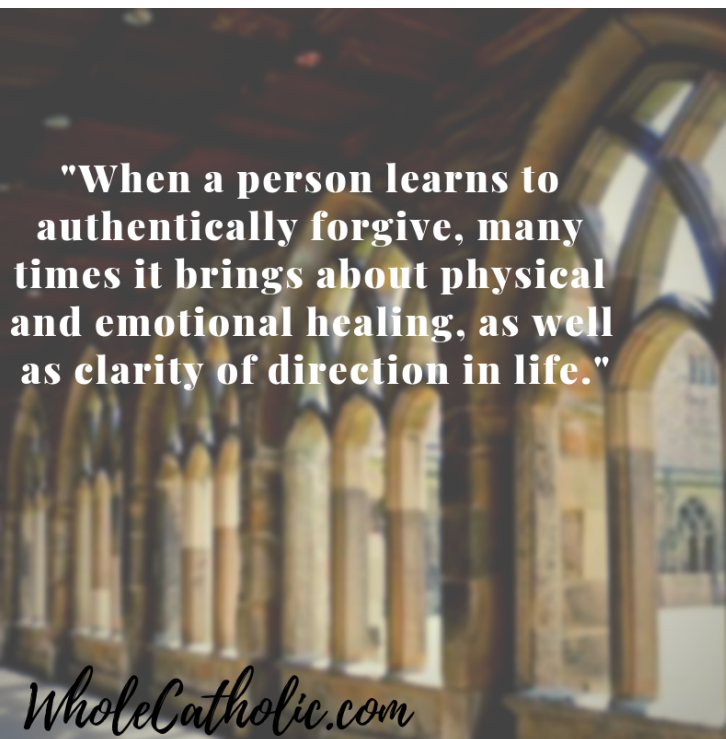
KEY #3 (CONT'D.)

forgive when they willfully abandon resentment and related responses (to which they have a right), and endeavor to respond to the wrongdoer based on the moral principle of beneficence, which may include compassion, unconditional worth, generosity, and moral love (to which the wrongdoer, by nature of the hurtful act or acts, has no right).”⁹

In Colossians 3:23-25, the Bible tells us that whatever we do (in this case, offering forgiveness), “...do from the heart, as for the Lord and not for others, knowing that you will receive from the Lord the due payment of the inheritance; be slaves of the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will receive recompense for the wrong he committed, and there is no partiality.”¹⁰

In the process of true forgiveness we learn to forgive, not because the other person deserves it, just as we do not deserve God’s forgiveness for our own sins, but we forgive because Christ also died for that person’s sins. We offer that forgiveness “as for the Lord and not for others,” saying to Jesus, “Your death on the cross paid for their sins, including their sins against me, and it was enough.” In our act of forgiveness we do not say that what the other person has done is right, we simply choose to say, “I trust you, God. I forgive this person, offer everything they owe me back to You and I trust that You will handle it all with Your infinite wisdom, justice, mercy and grace.”

9) Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2000
10) <http://uscgb.org/bible/colossians/3>



“When a person learns to authentically forgive, many times it brings about physical and emotional healing, as well as clarity of direction in life.”

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“After years of going to counselors that got me to a place of “good enough,” I knew I was still missing something—I still struggled with anxiety and depression. After meeting with Jansen and learning the principles of God’s Kingdom from him I can truly say my life has completely changed. I no longer fear, or make decisions from a place of fear. I used to suffer chronic upper back pain which I attributed to stress. It is all completely gone now, as if the weight of the world was lifted off my shoulders. I can finally sleep through the night. Jansen helped me to see how my soul could be healed by God and how God could heal my emotions and even my physical body. He was right. I highly recommend Jansen to anyone who is struggling like I was. He has been gifted with the knowledge and wisdom of God’s healing power.”

S. S. - Catholic writer, blogger, speaker and Adult Faith Coordinator

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KEY #4: MAKE THE CHOICE TO FORGIVE

One of the many beauties of our faith is the free will that God has given to us. He does not force us to love Him, follow Him or even believe in Him. He has created us with the ability to make that choice, and all others in our lives, on our own. His love for us is so great that He chooses to set us free and allow us to come to Him without force or coercion.

In Galatians 5:13, right before he goes into talking about the fruits of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit, the apostle Paul encourages us to use that freedom wisely. “For you were called for freedom, brothers. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love.”¹¹

The Catechism also offers us insight into the nature of this freedom. “God created man a rational being, conferring on him the dignity of a person who can initiate and control his own

actions. ‘God willed that man should be ‘left in the hand of his own counsel,’ so that he might of his own accord seek his Creator and freely attain his full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him.’ Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. By free will one shapes one's own life. Human freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude.” (CCC #1730 and 1731)¹²

Ultimately, the choice to forgive is yours, and yours alone, and that freedom of choice is a major tool that opens up the door in your own life for powerful healing and transformation.

¹¹) <http://uscgb.org/bible/galatians/5>

¹²) http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p3s1c1a3.htm



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KEY #5: PRAYERS OF FORGIVENESS

While the choice to forgive is an act of our own free will, the actual act of forgiving is not something we can accomplish with the limited weakness of our feeble flesh. Forgiveness is an act not just of our will, but of our spirit, in partnership with the Spirit of God. We need His strength, wisdom, guidance and example to be able to fully forgive. Pope Francis has said that, “Forgiving people who have offended us is not easy,” so people must pray to the Lord “teach me to forgive as you have forgiven me.” And he went on to add, “Human strength or will is not enough to be able to forgive, it requires grace from the Holy Spirit.” We must first begin by praying to God for His help.

“I cannot believe that a soul which has arrived so near to Mercy itself, where she knows what she is, and how many sins God has forgiven her, should not instantly and willingly forgive others, and be pacified and wish well to everyone who has injured her, because she remembers the kindness and favors our Lord has shown her, whereby she has seen proofs of exceeding great love, and she is glad to have an opportunity offered to show some gratitude to her Lord.” — *St. Teresa of Avila*

With the guidance of the Lord, intercession of the saints, right understanding of the nature of forgiveness and having made the choice to forgive, we then can prayerfully offer forgiveness to those who have wronged us. It doesn't matter whether the person is sitting in front of you, lives on the other side of the world or if the person has long since passed from this life. Forgiveness is not a string of magical words that you deliver to a person, it is rather a prayer that you offer to the Lord. A prayer though which you offer kindness, compassion and forgiveness to others, just as Christ has offered forgiveness to you, as the Bible calls us to do in Ephesians 4:32. It is this prayerful willingness to offer forgiveness to others that opens up your life to true healing and transformation.

“Forgiving those who have caused pain or offense is not easy...It is a grace that we have to ask for, because the peace offered by Christ cannot take root in a heart that is incapable of living in fraternity with others and incapable of rebuilding those bonds after being wounded” — *Pope Francis*

READY TO BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY OF FORGIVENESS, HEALING AND TRANSFORMATION?

Are there struggles in your life that you can't seem to shake? Are there things that you wrestle with and you aren't even really sure how they found place in your life in the first place? There are certain ways that we open doors in our lives and invite these struggles in and we don't even know we're doing it. Through personalized Discipleship Deliverance and coaching, I can help you identify five major doors that a person can open to the enemy and guide you through steps for how to systematically walk through the interior of your heart, kick the enemy out, close those doors and lock them tight. By understanding biblical Catholic teaching, doctrine, tradition and sacraments, you can unfold the unique purpose for which you were created.

Unlock your destiny and purpose today! Contact Whole Catholic to sign up for personalized Catholic life and spiritual coaching!

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