

HOW TO FORGIVE



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HOW TO FORGIVE



- **How to forgive: The Three R's.**

Is there someone who has hurt you - perhaps more deeply than they know? Are you still holding on to resentment against them? If so, do you really desire to be free? Then the "Three "R's" can be for you, today, the three keys to freedom. All you have to do is use them.

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- **Remember how much you have been forgiven.**

Take a moment now to quickly read Matthew 18:21-35 (the parable of the king and the two debtors). The one, forgiven the equivalent of ten million dollars of debt, refused to forgive a fellow servant of a twenty dollar debt. The point is clear. I, as a redeemed sinner, have been forgiven an infinite amount by my Heavenly Father.

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- **Remember how much you have been forgiven.**

Who am I, then, to refuse to forgive my fellow man for his offenses against me? Even when they seem big, they are very small compared to the magnitude of my sins and sinfulness which the Father, through Christ, has "removed as far as the east is from the west." Remembering this has, on many occasions, helped me to quickly move to the next "R".

HOW TO FORGIVE



- **Release the debt.**

When someone has hurt me, they have incurred a debt to me. At the very least, they owe me an apology, and perhaps they should do something more to make up for the hurt. They owe me something. Here is the action part of forgiveness: I can choose to let go of this debt, to cancel it, to Release it. Look again at Matthew 18:27. The king released the debtor from his debt. He marked it, "paid in full" out of the compassion of his heart.

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- **Release the debt.**

No self-righteousness, no fanfare, just genuine compassion and release. This is a choice, an act of the will, which I can do whenever I decide. "But how can I do this if I "don't feel like it," you may be thinking. Take a moment and recall' the very first time you drove a car alone. Did you feel a little scared, anxious? Most of us did. Did you succumb to your feelings? No. You got in and drove anyway. Your will triumphed over your emotions.

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- **Release the debt.**

You acted contrary to your feelings. Just so, releasing the debt in an act of the will, and it doesn't have to depend on our shifting emotions. That warm, cozy feeling may be far away. Never mind. Decide to release the debt and do it. I find that I need to make this a definite transaction with God, telling Him, "Lord, I do release this debt and I forgive ____." Then, if it is appropriate, I need to let the other person know that I've for-given him.

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- **Resist taking the debt back again.**

Remember, it has been released. What if you do find yourself resenting the same offense again, as I have done at times? Simply recycle the process and release it again. In some cases of deep-rooted resentment, some of us may have to persist in this process until gradually we come to the point of putting it at rest. We can, more effectively, resist taking it back again if we refuse to allow our thoughts to dwell on the offense and our hurt. It helps to recall the greatness of God's forgiveness toward us.

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- **Diagram & Summary**

How to Forgive: The Three R's Diagram

