

Steps to Forgiveness and Healing

The Process

(Please feel free to copy this and the next eight pages for your personal use)

Your Struggle

I. Think of a current struggle in which you experienced feelings such as anger, resentment, anxiety, loneliness or depression.

Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

(Psalm 139:23-24)

Ia. What happened? Be specific.

Ib. How did you feel?

(Focus on simple emotions; the usual progression is disappointed and sad, hurt and angry, resentful and vengeful, and lonely and depressed.)

Ic. How would you like to have been treated?

Id. How did you react?

(Example: I got angry, called him/her a jerk, criticized him/her, pouted, refused to talk, isolated, gossiped, etc.)

Ie. In a few words, summarize your impression of the resented's behavior.

(Example: I thought my roommate was critical and unappreciative.)

Your Childhood

2. Think back to a time in your childhood when you felt the same feelings you just recorded,

and when you felt like someone else behaved in the same way you recorded in 1e.

2a. What happened? Be specific.

2b. How did you feel?

(Should be the same as 1b in your current struggle.)

2c. How would you like to have been treated?

2d. How did you react?

2e. In a few words, summarize your impression of the behavior of the resenter.

(Example: I thought my mother was critical and unappreciative.)

Fathers, do not exasperate your children, instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).

See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. (Hebrews 12:15)

Meditation

- 4a. Say a prayer asking Jesus for His guidance and protection as you prepare for the following meditation.
- 4b. Close your eyes, and picture yourself in the midst of your struggle from your childhood. Ask Jesus to reveal Himself to you and take note of His actions, words, and attitude toward you and the others as you picture them in the situation.

Take a few minutes to do this. When you are finished, record your experience in the space provided.

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age. (Matthew 28: 20).

Confession

- 5a. Look at the summaries in your current and childhood struggles (1e and 2e). Now, in the space below, after it says "I," fill in the same traits you recorded earlier, thereby confessing your projected attitudes and behaviors.

(As we confess, our feelings of hurt and anger will lessen, and we will begin to experience compassion for others.)

Example: I criticize.

I _____

5b. Now, write down how you practice the behaviors you confessed in 5a in your relationships with the following people:

Person in your struggle:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9).

Person in your childhood:

Do not judge, or you too will be judged, for in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? (Matthew 7:1-3).

Others (spouse, if married):

Myself:

God:

You therefore have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself because you who pass judgment do the same things. (Romans 2:1-3).

5c. What do you perceive as the false benefits of your confessed behaviors?

Example: revenge, better-than feelings, power, control, excitement, laziness, sympathy for being a victim, etc.

Forgiveness

6a. Fill in the blanks with the names of the people in your struggles, current and childhood, and then fill in their hurtful behavior. When you are finished writing, read it aloud.

I forgive: _____

for: _____

(If we feel unable to forgive, or still feel extreme hurt at this point, it is helpful to look back to see if we have anything additional to confess.)

6b. To recap, write down your confession from 5a.

6c. Now read the following prayer out loud.

“Thank You, Lord, for forgiving me, and thank You that You also want me to feel forgiven.”

6d. Fill in the blank with all the names of the people from whom you have been separated as a result of your behavior. Then say the completed statement aloud.

“I forgive myself for trying to punish myself and others through the behaviors and attitudes listed in my confession. This caused continuous hurt to myself and increased the separation between me and

and God.”

*Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.
(Ephesians 4:31-32).*

For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

(Matthew 6:14-15).

Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times,” (Matthew 18: 21-22).

7a. Ask God to change your hurtful attitudes and to replace them with loving and affirming ones. In the space provided, list three qualities you like about:
(As we repent, our sadness and disappointment lessen, and our joy increases as we connect with others.)

Yourself

I am _____

I am _____

I am _____

Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:44-45).

Person in your current struggle

He/She is _____

He/She is _____

He/She is _____

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, if anything is excellent, or praiseworthy, think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me, put it into practice, and the God of peace will be with you (Phillipians 4:8-9).

Person in your childhood

He/She is _____

He/She is _____

He/She is _____

God

God is _____

God is _____

God is _____

*Love each other as I have loved you.
(John 15:12)*

7b. Now, for each person you've included on this process sheet, write down some specific new loving attitudes and behaviors toward them that will replace your old attitudes and behaviors.

Person in your current struggle:

Person in your childhood:

Others:

Myself:

God:
