


1  **III. Steps to Forgiveness**

2  **A. Recognize that Bitterness is a Heart Problem**

 **For we are each responsible for our own conduct. (Gal.6:5)**

 **So our aim is to please him [Christ]... 2 Cor.5:9a**


Taking every thought captive... 2 Cor. 10:5

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B. Recognize that God expects us to change and change is possible.

Eph. 4:22-24;

Col. 3:12-14

4  **C. Practice Forgiveness from the heart (Matt. 18:21-35)**

 **■ “We harbor no ill will.”**

--Bruce Goodrich--

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6  **Forgiveness-
God’s Antidote to the Poison of Bitterness**


Matt. 18:21-35; Eph. 4:31-32; Luke 17:3-10

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8  **No middle ground**

“Anyone who has ever been victimized—and that includes survivors of crime, accidents, childhood abuse, political imprisonment, warfare, and so on—must decide whether or not to forgive the perpetrator. There can be no middle ground to this decision: either you decide to forgive the person who hurt you, or you hold on to bitterness and anger.”

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 “Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart.”

--Corrie Ten Boom--


10  **I. Looking for Loopholes**

A. Five Excuses to Not Forgive

 **Matthew 18:21-22 (NASB)**


Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.*






















11  **1. The hurt is too big. I can’t possibly forgive something that big.**

 “Are you being destroyed by a massive injury caused by another that you won’t let go of? The bigger it is, the harder you fall.”

--P.James MacDonald--

12  **2. I can’t forgive until I forget.**

 This is called “cherishing the hurt.”

- 13  **3. Time will heal the pain.
I don't have to forgive.**
- 14  **4. I'll forgive when they say they are sorry.”**
 1 Luke 17:3-4 (NASB)
“Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. “And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”
- 15  **5. ”If I forgive they’ll just do it again.”**
 2 ■ “I don’t want to take a risk.”
 ■ 7 x 70 (Matt. 18:21-35)
- 16  **B. What Forgiveness is not.**
- 17  **1. Forgiveness is not enabling.**
- 17  **2. Forgiveness is not rescuing.**
 1 Proverbs 9:9 (NLT)
Teach the wise, and they will be wiser. Teach the righteous, and they will learn more.
-  2 ■ **Forgiveness is not rescuing foolishness.**
- 18  **3. Forgiveness is not risking.**
Forgiveness does not mean ignoring other biblical responsibilities.
- 19  **II. Consequences of Unforgiveness (Eph. 4:31-32)**
“Many a man has lost his wife because he hated his boss. Many a mom has lost her kids because she hated her dad. Many an adult has lost his friends because he hated his enemies. When unforgiveness becomes bitterness, you had better get some body bags ready because unforgiveness destroys everyone in its path.” –P. James MacDonald--
- 20  **Bitter**
 2 ■ **The poisonous root from which wrath, anger, clamor, slander and malice come.**
- 21  **Wrath**
 2 ■ **It’s a deeply settled indignation that stokes the bitterness inside. It’s the every day choice to keep the bitterness alive**
- 22  **Anger**
 2 ■ **Chronically, explosive people are bitter people.**
- 23  **Clamor**
 2 ■ **“You hurt me and now you are going to hear me” –MacDonald--**
- 24  **Slander**

2 ■ Related to clamor, but simply means “evil speaking.”

25  **Malice**

2 ■ Malice is the general Greek word for evil-the root of all vices .
--MacArthur--

26  **III. Why Forgive?**

1. Forgiveness is man’s biggest need.

■ Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.
(NASB)

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2. Forgiveness is needed for salvation.

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3. We’re commanded to be forgiving.

Colossians 3:13 (NASB)

...bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

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4. Forgiveness is a prerequisite to mutual love.

■ “Forgiveness is the oil that keeps human relationships running.”

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