

Five Steps of Forgiveness
by Pastor Ed Conway

“Put on then, as God chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.” Colossians 3:12-14 (cf. Matthew 5:44; 6:9-15; Luke 6:28)

1. Jesus, I choose, as an act of my will to forgive _____. I forgive him for _____ (be specific, list offenses). I release this person from my judgments and place this person into your loving care.
2. Father, I ask that you forgive me for holding un-forgiveness, bitterness, and resentment in my heart against this person.
3. Holy Spirit, bring your restoration and healing into every area of my life, and produce your “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control” in my life.
4. Lord, when a negative thought comes into my mind empower me “to take every thought captive to obey Christ”. Help me to pray for this person, and to continue to release him into your care.
5. Now Father, give me faith and courage to move forward knowing that you are a Sovereign God, You have the very best future for me, and I can trust you to bring it about.

Note: There are times when additional action (i.e. restitution, personal confession, confrontation, or reporting to legal authorities) may be called for, but these should be done after seeking out godly and mature counsel (Lk 19:8; Mt 5:23-24; 18:15-20; Gal 6:1-4). There are immature actions (e.g. “I just want to tell you I’ve forgiven you”) when the most gracious decision is to forgive, let love cover it, and move on with our life (cf. 1 Peter 4:8).