

# Asking for A Friend: How to Really Forgive



Questions from Sept 21, 2025

## A. Understand What is at Stake

- (1) Bitterness poisons and opens your heart to demons.
  - Ephesians 4:26-27; Hebrews 12:15.
- (2) Bitterness cannot permanently co-exist with the Love of God.
  - It's one or the other. Matt 5:22; 1 John 4:20.

## B. Understand What Forgiveness is Not:

- Letting someone off the hook or being a doormat.
- Forgetting the offense or trusting the offender.

## C. Understand What Forgiveness is:

- ❖ A *decision* to refuse revenge, have mercy, & seek reconciliation.

- (1) Refuse Revenge – Romans 12:17-19
  - Physically, emotionally, socially, even mentally (no fantasies).
- (2) Have Mercy – Matthew 18:21-35
  - Love the person and seek her good in prayer and service.
  - Christians cannot withhold the mercy that we have received.
- (3) Seek Reconciliation – Matthew 18:15-20
  - God bore the cost of your sin, so that your relationship with Him could be healed. You are called to do the same for others.
  - But only if they truly repent. Otherwise, keep relational distance.

## Ice Breaker

- (1) Share how you are doing and pray for each other.

## Digging Deeper & Living Out

- (2) Read Point A1, Ephesians 4:26-27 and Hebrews 12:15. Explain what it means to “not let the sun go down while you are still angry” and why it is dangerous to do so.
- (3) Read A2, Matthew 5:21-22 and 1 John 4:20. Explain why bitterness and the love of God cannot permanently co-exist in the same heart.
- (4) Read Point B.
  - Is a desire to seek justice incompatible with forgiveness?
  - Must a person “forgive and forget” in order for their forgiveness to be genuine?
- (5) Read the definition of Forgiveness in Point C. Then read C1 and Romans 12:17-19. Why must we refuse to seek revenge in order to really forgive? How is that different from letting a person off the hook?
- (6) Read Point C2 and Matthew 18:21-35. Why is mercy necessary for true forgiveness?
- (7) Read Point C3 and Matthew 18:15-20.
  - What is the ultimate goal of true forgiveness?
  - Explain why reconciliation requires that the person forgiving must bear the cost of the other person's sin?
  - What happens if the other person refuses to repent?