

# **EXTENDING FORGIVENESS**

Be kind to one another,  
tenderhearted, forgiving  
each other . . . .

Ephesians 4:32

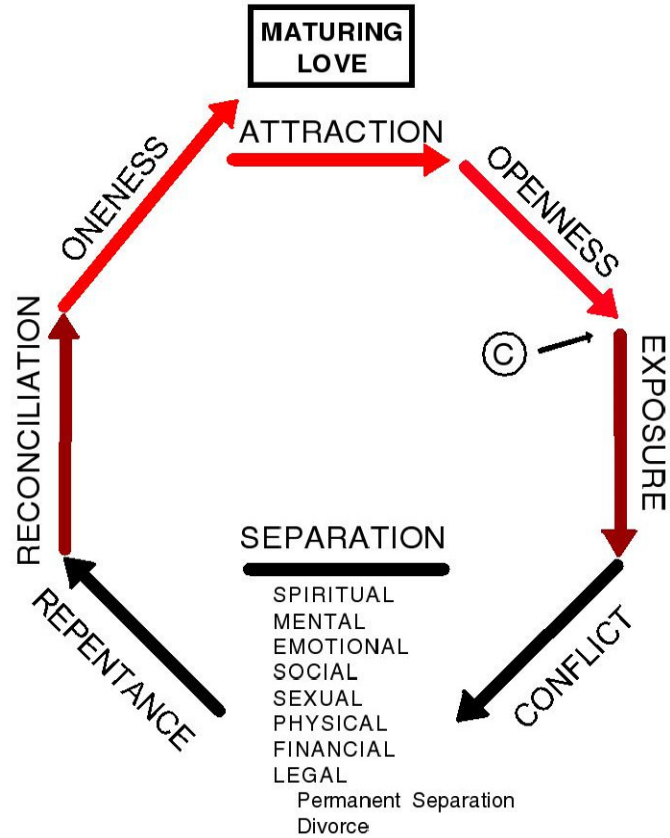
Nothing is more practical in Christian living than dealing with conflict in human relations. Roommates, church staff members, married couples, fellow missionaries, co-workers, school friends, family members, business partners—all know the hurt, frustration, and disillusionment that discord brings. Is there a sure route to oneness and harmony? What is forgiveness? How can I make it work? What about repeated offenses?

“I can forgive, but I can’t forget. What can I do?” “I can forgive others, but I can’t forgive myself.” “You’re asking me to forgive this person for doing THAT?” These kinds of statements are heard daily in the discipling process.

God wants us to live in harmony and unity in the body of Christ. How can that happen? We must make extending forgiveness a way of life. When someone hurts us, we need to extend forgiveness and not, “Let the sun go down on our wrath.”

EXTEND  
FORGIVE

# ACHIEVING ONENESS

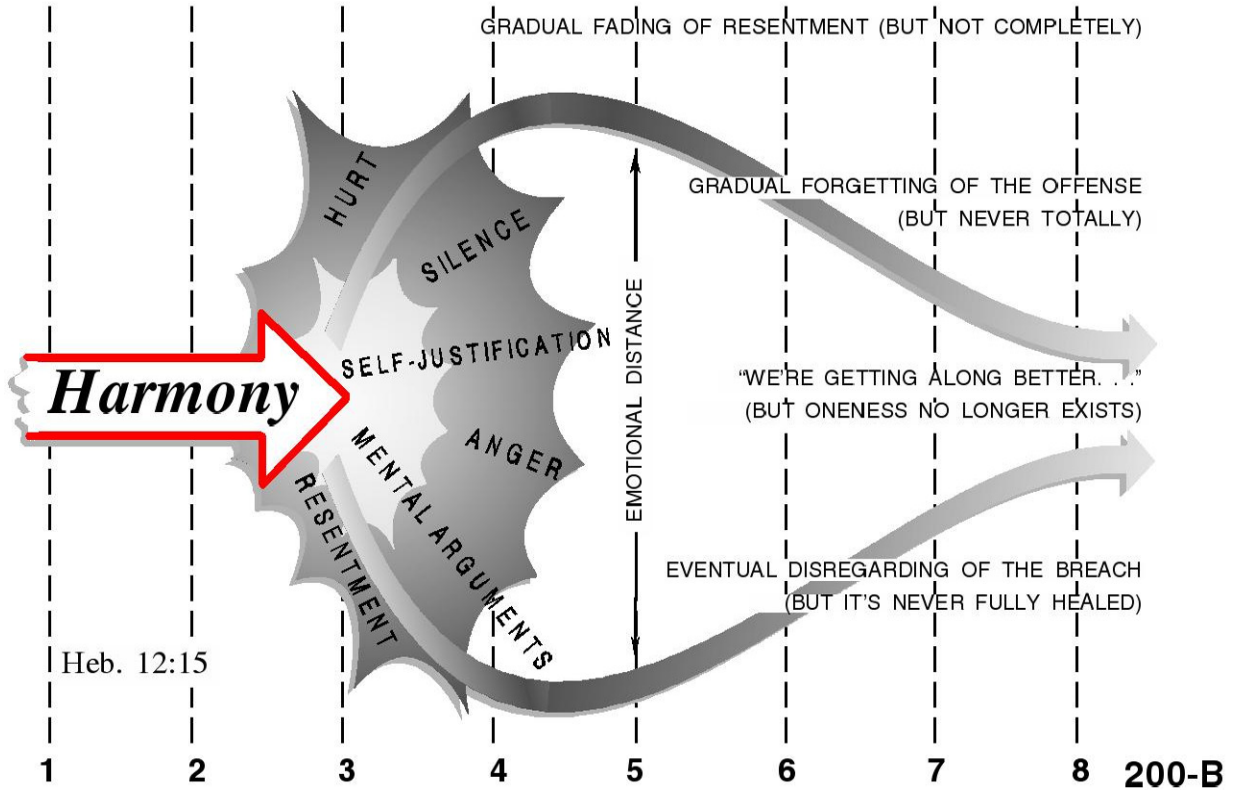


Eph. 4:2-3  
John 17:21-23

200-A

## **NOTES**

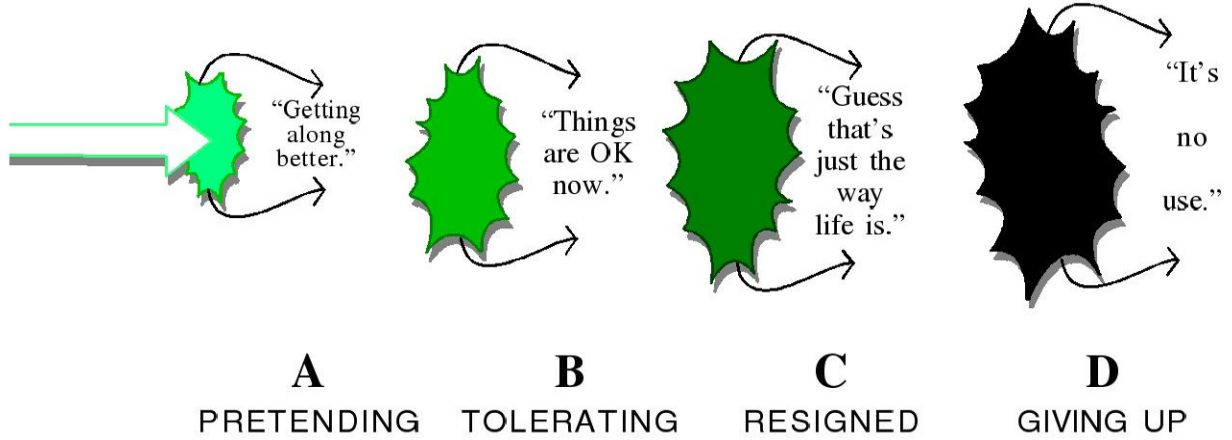
# PERSONAL CONFLICT WITHOUT FORGIVENESS



## NOTES

# CONTINUAL CONFLICT WITHOUT FORGIVENESS

Proverbs 16:18  
Proverbs 28:25  
1 Peter 5:5



200-C

## **NOTES**

# EXTENDING FORGIVENESS

**Extending forgiveness is taking the time to consider how a person has hurt me. This would include listing the act, my hurt, the ramifications, and my sinful reactions. Then I depend on the indwelling forgiver, Jesus, as I extend grace to the offender just as Jesus extended grace to me.**

## I. WHAT FORGIVING IS NOT

When I endeavor to understand forgiveness—what it is and how it works—much time and effort can be saved and misunderstanding avoided, if I eliminate what forgiveness is NOT. It is not ignoring, disregarding, tolerating, excusing, overlooking, or closing my eyes to the wrong another person has done against me. It is not simply letting time pass after the offense has been committed. It is not forgetting that the offense happened—or pretending that it didn't. It is not just resigning myself to the other person's actions by saying, "Well, that's just the way that person is."

## II. WHY FORGIVENESS IS NECESSARY

- A. If I don't exercise true forgiveness, I continue to hold the offender responsible (guilty) for the wrong. This can result in an accumulated "treasure" of fault in my mind toward the offender all ready to be "cashed in" when I feel the situation calls for it.
- B. Without forgiveness, an attitude of unforgiveness fosters resentment, and this crystallizes into bitterness (Hebrews 12:15). This can make me harsh, critical, cynical, and mistrustful. Forgiveness breaks the bondage of bitterness.
- C. Without true forgiveness, I may secretly await the "joy" of seeing the offender punished by God—and be delighted when it happens. This is a form of vengeance which is godship.
- D. Not forgiving may cause problems in relating to another person who reminds me of the initial offender.

*Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, / And do not let your heart be glad  
when he stumbles; / Lest the Lord see it and be displeased, / And He turn away  
His anger from him.*

Proverbs 24:17-18

*Never take vengeance into your own hands. Stand back and let God  
punish, if He will.*

Romans 12:19 (PHILLIPS)

## III. THE PROCESS OF EXTENDING FORGIVENESS

- A. I need to make four lists. First, I list what this person did or didn't do that affected me. Second, I list all the hurt I have felt regarding this offense. I think of all the emotions I've experienced and write them down. These feelings could include being: embarrassed, belittled, devastated, defiled, hustled, cheated, or ridiculed. Third, I list all the ramifications of the offense. How did this action affect me spiritually, psychologically, physically, socially, financially, maritally, or parentally?

**200-D (2 pages)**

This clarifies HOW the offense has affected me. Another ramification is that I can develop “rotten reasoning” about God, myself, or others. For example: God can’t be trusted; all men are horrible; or I will never love anyone again. Fourth, I list my sinful reactions regarding this offense. That would include such things as: bitterness, gossip, revenge, slander, rage, and abusive speech. This could include any grudge I may be holding. This could also include an attitude of unforgiveness.

- B. Now I check page 8A and use the keys of forgiveness on Diagram 200-E2.
- C. This completes human forgiveness.
- D. Destroy the list.

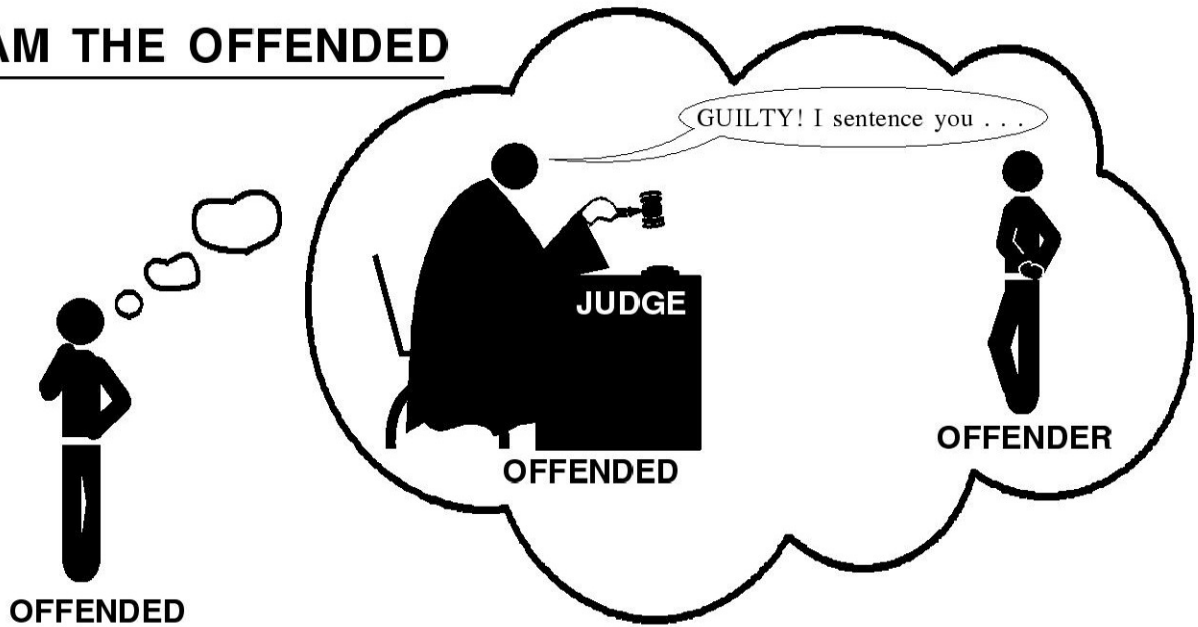
NOTE: Do not tell the offender he/she is forgiven. The forgiving of a person does not require that the person be told. Telling the person may simply create more conflict. Your forgiveness of him/her was between you and God alone.

- Forgiving the offender deals with unforgiveness which was your side of the breach. The offender may never seek your forgiveness. If or when he/she does, all you need to say is, “I am so thankful that you asked me. Yes, I do forgive you.”
- E. If his/her offense is of a persistent nature that disrupts Christian harmony, God may lead you to confront the person with his/her need—after you have exercised forgiveness toward him/her.
- The first objective of such a confrontation is to purify the church.
  - The secondary purpose is to “win” or “restore” the offender.
  - The pattern for confrontation is given in Matthew 18:15-17 and Proverbs 25:9.
  - The attitude required on the part of the confronter is spelled out in Galatians 6:1-2.



# I AM THE OFFENDED

1



When I am offended, in my mind I see the offender as guilty (James 4:12). Only God has the right to execute judgment (Ps. 9:7-8; Acts 17:31). My attempt to lay guilt on the offender by setting a standard is reacting after the flesh. For example: "This person should not have treated me that way" (Matthew 7:1-5).

200-E

## **NOTES**

## THE RESULT OF MY FLESHLY REACTIONS

### 2

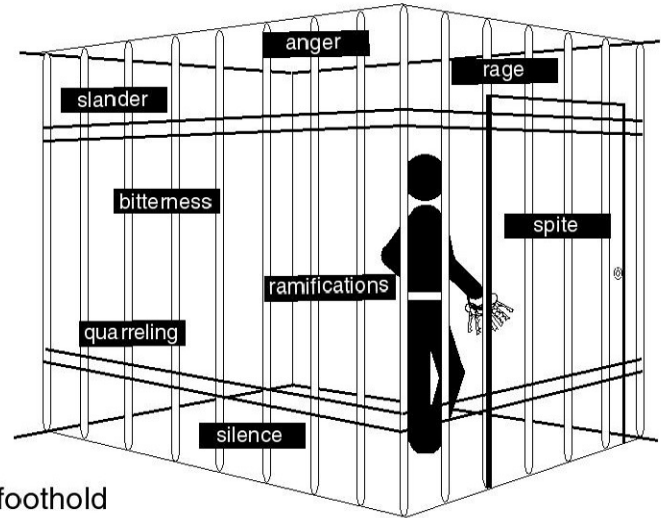
I may react silently and “stuff” my bitterness or wrath. Or I may express it in abusive speech or actions, slander, or swearing. The result is the same.

**Ephesians 4:26-27, 31-32**

**1 Peter 5:8-9**

**Ecclesiastes 7:9**

Going to bed angry gives the Devil a foothold to torment me, a child of God. I am actually held prisoner by reacting after the flesh. This control of the flesh and torment by the Devil can only be stopped by extending forgiveness. The offender should ask forgiveness from me, but may never do so. Consequently, I must initiate forgiveness. Notice: I have the keys to freedom in my hand.



200-E1

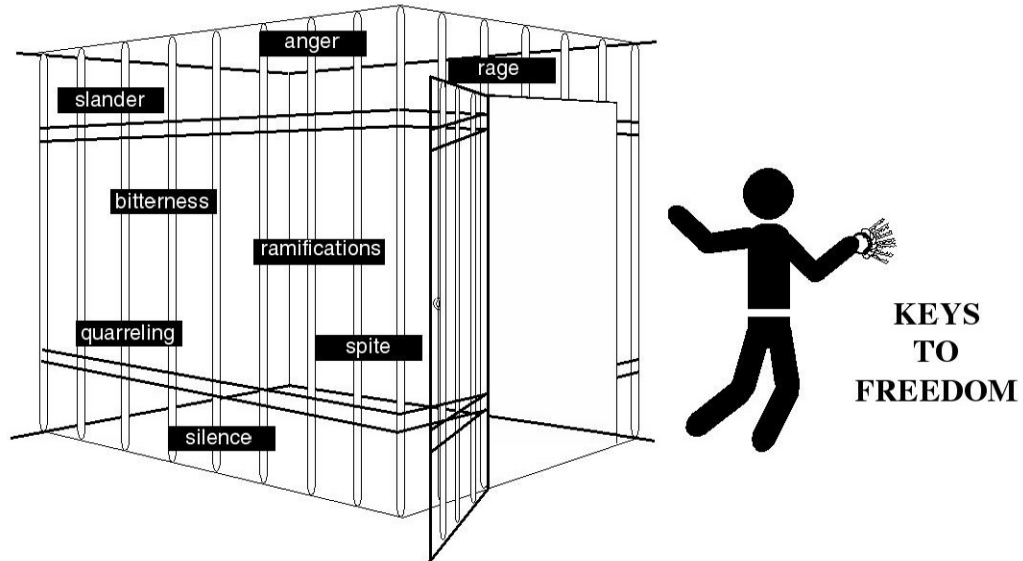
### **NOTES**



## I CHOOSE TO EXTEND FORGIVENESS

### 3

I can achieve freedom by extending forgiveness. By using these keys I am set free from the prison and torment. Now the truth about me can be seen and realized.



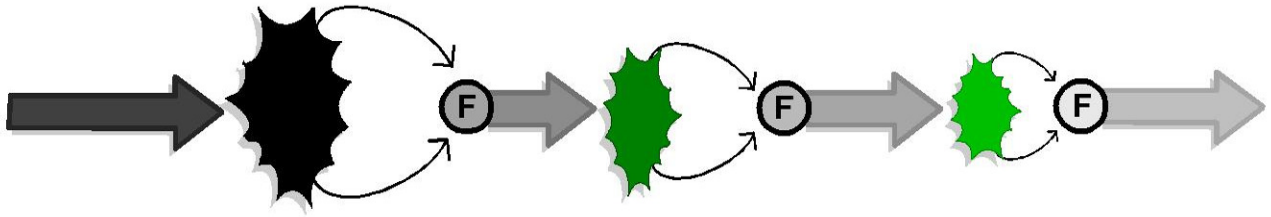
- Key #1 - I admit to God how I felt regarding this offense (Psalm 62:8).
- Key #2 - I admit to God that I have been holding the person guilty for the act, the hurt, and the ramifications of the offense (Luke 6:37; Rom. 2:1).
- Key #3 - I now extend (give freely) my forgiveness to the person for that action, my hurt, and the ramifications of the action. This forgiveness is extending grace to the offender as Christ extended grace to me (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13).
- Key #4 - I now put the offender into God's hands and let go. I will allow God to work in this person's life in His time (1 Peter 5:7).
- Key #5 - I now name and confess (agree with God) that my sinful reactions and attitudes (including holding the offender guilty) were wrong. I ask God to show me areas of godship and repent (1 John 1:9).
- Key #6 - I choose to live as the new creation that I am (2 Cor. 5:17). This means I accept that God has forgiven me, and I lay aside my fleshly reactions (Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:8, 12).
- Key #7 - I tell God I am willing to be reconciled to the offender and allow Him to love the offender through me (2 Cor. 5:18; Col. 3:14; Heb. 12:14).

**200-E2**

# PERSONAL CONFLICT WITH TRUE FORGIVENESS

“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.”

Ephesians 4:31-32



MATTHEW 18:21-22

200-F

## **NOTES**

## TESTS OF FORGIVENESS

- A. Do you see the offender as not guilty?
- B. Are you sincerely thanking God for the lessons learned during the pain (Romans 8:28-29)?
- C. Can you talk about your hurt without getting angry, without feeling resentful, without the slightest thought of revenge (Ephesians 4:31)?
- D. Do you have a willingness to accept your part of the blame for what happened?
- E. Can you revisit the scene or the person(s) involved in your hurt without experiencing a negative reaction?
- F. Are you rewarding with good those who have hurt you (Romans 12:20-21)?

**200-G**

## **NOTES**