

STEPS FOR SEEKING FORGIVENESS

1. Admit what you did was wrong or hurtful.
2. Consider it from the other's perspective. Empathize with the pain you have caused.
3. Take responsibility for your actions and make restitution if necessary.
4. Pray for the other person ahead of time.
5. Do not attempt to bring up their faults or attempt to justify your actions. "I'm sorry that you're hurt" is not an apology "I'm sorry that I hurt you by _____" is an apology.
6. Apologize and ask for forgiveness.
7. Don't demand forgiveness on the spot; it often takes time.
8. Re-establish your relationship expectations and commit to upholding them.
9. Forgive yourself.
10. Give the other person time to rebuild trust and closeness after they forgive you. They may not be able to go right back to "normal;" healing takes time.

STEPS FOR GRANTING FORGIVENESS

1. Pray for a heart of forgiveness.
2. Acknowledge your pain and anger. Allow yourself to feel disrespected.
3. Give up your right to "get even," but insist on being treated better in the future.
4. Consider if you have something to own on your part.
5. Resist bringing up past transgressions; stay on the current issue.
6. Forgive before talking to them. Let go of blame, resentment, and negativity.
7. Don't withhold forgiveness or use it as leverage to get something else you want. You have to "give" up your right to justice; you are for-"giving" someone.
8. Communicate your forgiveness to them.
9. Re-establish your relationship expectations and boundaries. Be specific about your future expectations and limits.
10. Give them grace in their changed behavior. Change happens a little bit over time.
11. Pray together for healing.
12. Work toward reconciliation (when safe).



Biblical Process to Forgiveness

Matthew 18:15-20 NIV - "15 "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. 16 But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17 If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. 18 "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Matthew 5:23-24 NIV - "23 "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift."

God's Standard for Us

Matthew 6:5, 12-15 NIV - "5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ... 12 And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.' 14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

A Parable on Forgiveness

Matthew 18:21-35 NIV - "21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. 23 "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. 26 "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' 27 The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. 28 "But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded. 29 "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.' 30 "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. 32 "Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' 34 In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. 35 "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."