

Forgiveness: Making Space for Grace

Study Guide

By Nan Brown Self

Introduction to Forgiveness Study Guide

Reflective Questions

1. Which of the consequences of unforgiveness listed below do you experience?
2. What is their impact on your life?

Depression	Anxiety	Doubt and Unbelief	Ingratitude	Sickness
Impatience	Slander	Drivenness	Bone Problems	Arthritis
Fear	Anger	Bitterness	Resentment	Rage
Pride	Judgment	Guilt	Abuse: Emotional, Physical, or Sexual	Passivity: Mind, Will, or Emotions
Envy	Materialism			

Introduction to Forgiveness Study Guide

Worksheet

1. Confess your sin of unforgiveness.

"Lord, I have not forgiven (name of person) for (specific description of what you did not forgive)."

Example: "Lord, I have not forgiven Jane for the way she treated my family and me after my husband left us."

2. Confess your sin of anger.

"Lord, I have not forgiven (name of person) for (specific description of what you did not forgive)."

Example: "Lord, I am angry and have bitterness toward Jane for her complete disregard of the pain that I have felt since Jack left us."

3. Pray for forgiveness and repent.

"God, forgive me for (exactly what you did), I repent of my sins."

Example: "God, forgive me for my unforgiveness and resentment toward Jane, I repent of my sins."

4. Ask God to nail your sin of anger to the cross and put it to death. (Colossians 2:13-14)

Example: "God, I ask you to nail my sin of anger and bitterness to the cross and put it to death."

Allow yourself to grieve any feelings of pain or loss associated with your offenses or the offenses of others. Release those feelings to God.

5. Ask God to remove any unforgiveness, bitterness, anger or any other sin from your heart and replace it with the opposite.

"Lord, please take the (names of sins) out of my heart and replace them with (the opposites of those sins)."

Example: "Lord, please take the unforgiveness and anger out of my heart and give me a heart of forgiveness, acceptance and love."

6. Ask God to give you a new heart by faith.

""Lord, I receive a new heart of (name the new heart you want) by faith."

Example: "Lord, I receive a new heart of forgiveness, acceptance and love by faith. (Ezekiel 36:26)"

7. Please meet those needs that were not met in me as a child.

List of needs: unconditional love, acceptance, worth and value, security, recognition, nurture and emotional nourishment, and comfort.

Example: "Lord, please meet the needs for unconditional love, acceptance and security that were not met in me as a child."

8. Ask God to show you how unforgiveness and other sins have affected or hurt your relationships with others. Pray and ask God to heal those relationships.

Example: "Lord show me how anger and unforgiveness have hurt my relationships with others. Please heal every one of these relationships."

Introduction to Forgiveness Study Guide

Prayer

Dear Lord,

I do not deserve your grace. I have judged you. I have judged other people. And I have judged myself. Through unforgiveness I have been dragging around peoples' sins against me in my heart and spirit. This unforgiveness has created a lonely, unhappy feeling inside of me. You bought and paid for my forgiveness on the cross. I want to receive your forgiveness and give it away as a gift to others. I choose to refuse to live in the past. I take your path of forgiveness and receive the peace and freedom that it provides.

In the name of Jesus,

Amen

The Prison of Unforgiveness Study Guide

Reflective Questions

1. Whom do you need to be willing to forgive?
2. When will you be ready to forgive them from your heart? What does forgiving from your heart mean to you?
3. Who has shown mercy and grace to you? In what ways have they demonstrated grace and mercy?
4. Can you think of offenses that you have taken up for other people in the past?
5. Are you currently holding onto offenses for anyone?
6. What prayers will you offer to God regarding taking up the offenses of others in the future?

The Prison of Unforgiveness Study Guide

Worksheet

1. Confess your sin of unforgiveness.

"Lord, I have not forgiven (name of person) for (specific description of what you did not forgive)."

Example: "Lord, I have not forgiven Jack for telling my business partner lies about my business ability."

2. Pray for forgiveness and repent.

"God, forgive me for (name what you did), I repent of my sins."

Example: "God, forgive me for my unforgiveness toward Jack; I repent of my sins."

3. Ask God to nail your sin of unforgiveness to the cross and put it to death.

Example: "God, I ask you to nail my sins of pride and unforgiveness to the cross and put them to death."

Allow yourself to grieve any feelings of pain or loss associated with your offenses or the offenses of others. Release those feelings to God. (Colossians 2:13-14)

4. Ask God to remove any unforgiveness, rebellion, pride or any other sin from your heart and replace it with the opposite.

"Lord, please take the (name of sin) out of my heart and replace it with (the opposite of those sins)."

Example: "Lord, please take the unforgiveness and bitterness out of my heart and give me a heart of forgiveness, acceptance and love."

5. Ask God to give you a new heart by faith.

"Lord, I receive a new heart of (name the new heart you want) by faith."

Example: "Lord, I receive a new heart of forgiveness, acceptance and love by faith (Ezekiel 36:26)."

6. Please meet those needs that were not met in me as a child.

List of needs: unconditional love, acceptance, worth and value, security, recognition, nurture and emotional nourishment, and comfort.

Example: "Lord, please meet the needs for unconditional love, acceptance and emotional nourishment that were not met in me as a child."

7. Ask God to show you how unforgiveness and other sins have affected or hurt your relationships with others. Pray and ask God to heal those relationships.

Example: "Lord show me how unforgiveness has hurt my relationships with others."

When God reveals these things, ask Him to heal those relationships.

8. Thank Him for your answered prayers. (Philippians 4:6)

The Prison of Unforgiveness Study Guide

Prayer

Dear Lord,

I have been in the prison of unforgiveness because I have not forgiven myself or other people. I did not know that every offense against me brings with it the grace to forgive others or myself. You died upon the cross so that I could receive your gift of grace. You gave it freely and without measure. I have sinned against your amazing love for me. I confess my sins of unforgiveness and I choose to repent. Forgive me Lord and release me from my past. I am ready to come out of the prison of unforgiveness.

In the name of Jesus,

Amen

Roots of Unforgiveness Study Guide

Questions for Reflection

1. Ask God to reveal to you any roots of unforgiveness that you have in your heart.
2. Name some things that God has brought into your life that show you that He deeply cares for you.
3. Do you have any relatives who have been righteous roots in your family? Have you prayed and asked God to let you be a righteous root for your family yet?

Roots of Unforgiveness Study Guide

Worksheet

1. Name one major root that you know that you have in your heart.
2. What are three different kinds of fruit that this root has produced in your life?
3. Would you say that the fruit of this root has benefitted or harmed you? Describe the benefit or harm in your own words.
4. Are any of these six things mentioned in Colossians 2:6-7 descriptive of your relationship with Christ? Name which ones apply.
 - You walk in union with Christ
 - You are rooted in Christ
 - You reflect Christ's character
 - You increasingly establish yourself in your faith
 - You are joyful in your faith
 - You walk in gratitude with thanksgiving
5. If you were to describe your relationship to Christ to someone else, what would you say?

Roots of Unforgiveness Study Guide

Prayer

Dear Lord,

I need your help to get to the bottom of my roots of unforgiveness, pride and bitter-root judgment. I want to be free from the spiritual bondage that they bring. I know that you would never leave or forsake me. I am crying out to you from the depths of my heart. Please deliver me from the power of these roots. Uproot them and lay your ax to them so that I may walk in freedom according to your plan and purpose for me. Help me to walk in righteousness and become a righteous root in my family.

In the name of Jesus,

Amen

Pride Study Guide

Reflective Questions

1. In what ways has pride been a stumbling block for you?
2. When does “needing to be right” cause strife or conflict in your life?
3. What is your definition of contentment?

Pride Study Guide

Worksheet

1. Who or what is easy for you to judge?
2. Who was your most powerful critic when you were young?
3. What did that person criticize you for?
4. To whom do you compare yourself to now? Why?
5. Is there a wall separating you from God? How?
6. Have you gone through the process of confessing your sins and repenting of them?
7. How can you prepare your heart to know God?
8. How can you uproot rebellion in your life? How can you make sure that your spirit is faithful to God?
9. What does the word “surrender” mean to you? Have you ever considered surrendering to God?
10. Would you be willing to ask God to bring His grace into your life today?

Pride Study Guide

Prayer

Dear Lord,

I know that I have many areas of pride in my life. I ask you in your mercy to reveal them to me in the order that I need to see them. I submit to your guidance and wisdom. Pride has deceived me many times; that is why I need your help. I have brought judgment upon myself because I have judged others. I ask your forgiveness and I repent of comparing myself with others. I want you to uproot my pride and lay the ax to its roots. I have felt separated from you because of my disobedience. I choose your caring ways of humility and contentment by faith.

In the name of Jesus,

Amen

Bitter-Root Judgment Study Guide

Reflective Questions

1. What is your relationship like with each of your parents? If they are deceased, what was your relationship like with each parent?
2. What judgments do you hold against them?
3. What challenges do you have as a parent? Could they be related to bitter-root judgment?
4. What patterns of behavior do you repeat that are harmful to you or others?
5. Have you tried to overcome fear, doubt, rejection, heartache, jealousy, or anger in your own life? How do they relate to your past?

Bitter-Root Judgment Study Guide

Worksheet

1. Confess your bitter-root judgment, forgive yourself and repent of your sins.

"Lord, I have judged and not forgiven my (person) for (what you judged them for), and I forgive myself and repent of my sins."

Example: "God, I forgive my mother for not being present and nurturing during my childhood. I forgive myself for judging her and repent of my sins."

2. Ask God to nail your bitter-root judgment to the cross and put it to death. (Colossians 2:13-14)

Example: "God, I ask you to nail my sin of bitter-root judgment to the cross and put it to death."

Allow yourself to grieve any feelings of pain or loss, associated with your parents' offenses, and release them (both parents and offenses) to God.

3. Ask God to remove any judgment, unforgiveness, hardheartedness, or other sin from your heart and replace it with the opposite.

"Lord, please take the (name of sin) out of my heart and replace it with (the opposite of your sin)."

Example: "Lord, please take the unforgiveness and fear of rejection out of my heart and replace them with forgiveness and acceptance."

4. Ask God to give you a new heart.

"Lord, I receive a new heart of (the qualities you want) by faith."

Example: "Lord, I receive a new heart of forgiveness and acceptance by faith." (Ezekiel 36:26)

5. Ask the Lord to meet those needs that were not met in you as a child.

Choose the needs that you want God to meet for the healing of this bitter root.

These needs include unconditional love, acceptance, worth and value, security, recognition, nurture and emotional nourishment, and comfort.

"Lord, please meet the needs for (your needs) that were not met in me as a child."

Example: "Lord, please meet the needs for unconditional love, security, and comfort that were not met in me as a child."

6. Ask God to show you how this bitter root has affected or hurt your relationships with others. Pray, and ask God to heal those relationships.

Example: "Lord, show me how my bitter roots have affected my relationships with others. I ask that you heal this broken relationship with Meredith."

7. Thank Him for your answered prayers. (Philippians 4:6)

Example: "By faith, I thank you for answering my prayers."

Bitter-Root Judgment Study Guide

Prayer

Dear Lord,

I thank you for revealing to me in your scripture that if I honor my mother and my father, life will go well with me. I never did fully understand the importance and benefit of honoring my parents. I know now that I am held accountable to forgive my parents. I see that I have judged my mother and father for so many painful and difficult situations in our family. As you reveal my sins of judgment to me, I will confess and repent of them. I ask you to lift them up to the cross and nail them to death. You died on the cross for me to be set free from my sins. Please release those judgments from my past and set me free.

In the name of Jesus,

Amen

Wounds Study Guide

Reflective Questions

1. Do you have old wounds that are festering in your heart? What are they?
2. What steps will you take to be sure that they heal?
3. The next time that you overreact to someone or something that hurt you, ask yourself a question. "What old wounds of mine could have caused this exaggerated response?"
4. What can you do to release your anger and bitterness toward the person or persons who wounded you or your family?

Wounds Study Guide

Worksheet

1. Name a deep wound that you know that you have. Write out what happened to you or describe it to someone that you trust.

2. What were the repeated offenses that caused this wound to come to your mind?

3. Name the deep wound and the person or persons that wounded you. Stop the bleeding by allowing yourself to feel the emotions that you have about this wound. Name these emotions.

Example: "Lord, I feel betrayed and rejected by this deep wound from (name of person or persons involved in wounding you)."

4. Grieve over this wound to cleanse it.

Example: "I have deep sadness and sorrow (name any feelings that come to mind) about the way that I was wounded."

5. Cut out the damage around the wound.

Example: "Lord, please remove all of the injured tissue and repair this wound."

6. Apply the medicine that the Lord has provided for you. Allow God to bring you to a place of confession and repentance.

Example: "Lord, I confess my sin of unforgiveness toward (name the person or persons). I ask you to forgive me for my sin. I forsake my sin by falling out of agreement with it. I accept the grace that you provided for me on the cross to forgive others. I extend your grace to others by forgiving them and I extend your grace to myself. "

7. Suture the wound.

Example: "Lord, please put my sin of (name the sin) to death on the cross. I ask you to reveal the roots of my sin to me and remove them."

8. Bandage the wound. Ask God to take the unforgiveness out of your heart and replace it with a heart of forgiveness. Ask God to meet any unmet needs that you might have from your

childhood, such as the needs for unconditional love, acceptance, security, worth and value, recognition, comfort, and nurturing and emotional nourishment.

Example: “Thank you, Lord, for taking out my heart of unforgiveness and replacing it with a heart of forgiveness. I ask you to meet the needs for unconditional love, worth and value that were not met when I was a child.”

9. Ask forgiveness of the person whom you hurt. Do this in person if possible. Pray and ask God to show you the right time and place.

Example: Name what you did while taking full responsibility for your actions: “Please forgive me for (be specific).” Pause, and give the person that you are asking to forgive you an opportunity to respond.

10. Be patient while your wound heals from the inside out. By faith thank God for His answers to your prayers. Close your wounds by following God’s example in Hebrews 8:12 and actively do not remember the sins of the person that you had unforgiveness toward.

Wounds Study Guide

Prayer

Dear Lord,

I have had abrasions and bruises over many years of my life. The majority of them have healed. It is the repeated wounds and deep wounds that concern me the most. I have tried to deny that they exist but that does not bring healing or health. Instead the wounds continue to produce infection and pain. I ask you to spiritually cut out the damaged tissue, cleanse the wound, apply the needed medicine, and bandage the wound through my confession of my sins and my repentance. I pray to be healed from the inside out in my spirit, soul, and body. I choose not to remember the sins against me and I leave them with you.

In the name of Jesus,

Amen

Restoring Relationships Study Guide

Reflective Questions

1. Describe your relationship with God. Is it close or distant?
2. Give examples of ways and times that you communicate with God.
3. What are your relationships with your friends like? What could you do to improve these relationships?
4. What do you need to forgive yourself for?
5. Name one thing that you can do to improve your relationship with God?

Restoring Relationships Study Guide

Worksheet

1. Confess your sin of unforgiveness. “God, I have not forgiven (name of person) for (specific description of what you did not forgive). “

Example 1 (Unforgiveness toward God): “God, I have unforgiveness toward you for allowing my mother to die so suddenly. I did not get to tell her how much I loved her. I miss her so much.”

Example 2 (Unforgiveness against myself): “God, I have not forgiven myself for the pain and suffering that I caused my brother when I refused to speak to him and shut him out of my life.”

2. Pray for forgiveness and repent. “God, forgive me for (describe what you did), I repent of my sins.”

Example 1 (Unforgiveness toward God): “God, forgive me for my judgment and anger toward you after my mother died. I repent of my sins.”

Example 2 (Unforgiveness against myself): “God, I choose to forgive myself for my bitterness and resentment toward my brother. I repent of my sins.”

3. Ask God to nail your sins to the cross and put them to death. (Colossians 2:13-14)

Example: “God, I ask you to nail my sins of unforgiveness, bitterness and anger to the cross and put them to death.”

Allow yourself to grieve any feelings of pain or loss associated with your offenses toward God, yourself or others. Release those feelings to God.

4. Ask God to remove any unforgiveness, rebellion, pride or any other sin from your heart and replace it with the opposite.

Example: “God, please take the (name of sin) out of my heart and replace it with (the opposite of that sin). Lord, please take the unforgiveness, bitterness, judgment and anger out of my heart and give me a heart of forgiveness, acceptance and love.”

5. Ask God to give you a new heart by faith. (Ezekiel 36:26) “God, I receive a new heart of (name the new heart you want) by faith. God, I receive a new heart of forgiveness, acceptance and love by faith.”

6. Ask God to meet those needs in you that were not met as a child.

List of needs: unconditional love, acceptance, worth and value, security, recognition, nurture and emotional nourishment, and comfort.

Example: “God, please meet the needs for unconditional love, acceptance and emotional nourishment that were not met in me as a child.”

7. Ask God to show you how unforgiveness and other sins have affected or hurt your relationship with Him, yourself and others. Pray and ask God to heal those relationships.

Example: “God, please show me how unforgiveness and my other sins have hurt my relationships with you, myself and others.

When God reveals to you what you need to know, pray and ask Him to heal your relationships.

8. Thank Him for your answered prayers. (Philippians 4:6)

Restoring Relationships Study Guide

Prayer

Dear Lord,

Thank you for showing me what a high priority forgiveness needs to be. I did not understand its importance in my past, present and future. I want to thank you for all of the opportunities that you have given me to forgive. You freely gave me your forgiveness and I received it as the gift that you intended it to be. Please show me the sins that I need to ask forgiveness for. Give me the grace to forgive and to repent of all of the sins that you reveal to me. Be with me as I go to ask the people whom I have offended for forgiveness.

In name of Jesus,

Amen

The Prison of Passivity Study Guide

Reflective Questions

1. In what areas of your life are you letting others choose for you?
2. How are you letting your circumstances choose for you? What could you do differently?
3. How are you allowing your feelings to influence your choices?
4. How is your past influencing important decisions that you need to make about your present and your future?

The Prison of Passivity Study Guide

Worksheet

1. Have you ever heard from God at any time in your life?
2. What were you doing when you heard from Him? Did you tell another person that you heard from God?
3. Have you ever felt like you were in the prison of passivity? If your answer is yes, what choices did you neglect to make or sins did you commit that secured the bars of the prison?
4. Do you feel like God has been too harsh and unyielding with you in some area of your life that caused you to feel separated from Him? What were the circumstances?
5. If, knowing what you know now, you could relive that time of feeling separated from Him, what would you do differently?
6. What has God done to bring you out of your past sins?
7. How did you respond to Him? Did you stubbornly rebel, or were you in a place where you were ready to listen and obey?
8. What characteristics of passivity do you have? Do you give up control of your life and let others choose? Are you angry because you don't speak up and communicate your needs? Do you get stuck in a victim role with others? Do you receive whatever thoughts come to your mind without checking their source? Do you harbor unforgiveness in your heart?
9. What characteristics of diligence do you have? Are you alert and persevering? Are you resolute, and do you act without unnecessary delay? Are you free to choose in your mind, will and emotions? Do you choose to forgive even if your emotions fight against your choice? Through faith and patience, do you inherit the promises of God?
10. How is the sin of passivity an obstacle to walking in forgiveness with God, yourself, and other people?

The Prison of Passivity Study Guide

Prayer

Dear Lord,

I realize that I have been passive in many areas of my life. I have let other things influence me. I have not freely chosen with my will and stood by my choices with conviction. I confess my passivity to you. I ask you to reveal to me every area of my mind and life that has been passive so that I can repent and be freed from this prison and my sins of passivity. I want to hear from you and to choose your way and your will. I want to follow Jesus by choosing diligence over passivity. I receive your help by faith.

In the name of Jesus,

Amen

Walking in Forgiveness Study Guide

Reflective Questions

1. What do you need to do to forsake the sin of unforgiveness?
2. What can you do to help yourself walk in forgiveness daily?
3. What scriptures will you use in your intercessory prayer for others?
4. Has God recently sent you any tests of forgiveness? What are they?

Walking in Forgiveness Study Guide

Worksheet

1. Have you ever restored an important relationship of yours through forgiveness?
2. If the answer is yes, what steps did you take to forgive?
3. What is your reaction to the statement that forgiveness is a journey with no end? What do you think that means?
4. Do you pray for yourself and others? Have you ever had a prayer answered? What was it?
5. Do you have any idea what God's special plan and purpose for you is?
6. What would a close, intimate relationship with the Lord look like to you?
7. Have you ever left the path that God has laid out for you? What influenced you to take a detour?
8. When have you refused to walk in the way God was leading you? Why? What were the consequences?
9. What gifts and talents has God given you?
10. What are some of the blessings that God has given you that you would like to thank him for?

Walking in Forgiveness Study Guide

Prayer

Dear Lord,

My greatest desire is to forsake my sins. Please help me to know what they are so that I can confess them to You, repent of them, and fall out of agreement with them. I look forward to a closer, more intimate relationship with you as I walk in forgiveness. Please teach me how to pray for others and myself. I want to be part of your mission to make people whole so that they can be reconciled to you.

In the name of Jesus,

Amen

A Kept Heart Brings Life Study Guide

Reflective Questions

1. Where in your journey to forgiveness do you need to exercise faith?
2. What do you need to surrender to God?
3. Where do you need to make space for grace in your life?
4. What will your renewed life look like?

A Kept Heart Brings Life Study Guide

Worksheet

1. Have you ever prayed for something important and realized that you had not prayed with faith in God? What were you praying for?
2. Have you come through some adversity in your life and been able to help someone else with a similar problem?
3. What lesson or lessons did you learn from helping them?
4. Ask God to show you why you needed to share your experience with them and how it benefited all of you.
5. When you think about God's presence going with you, what does that mean to you and how would it change your life?
6. Philippians 4:7 Amplified Bible (AMP) "And the peace of God [that peace which reassures the heart, that peace] which transcends all understanding, [that peace which] stands guard over your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus [is yours]." Have you ever experienced the peace of God described in the above scripture?
7. Are you ready to allow God to prepare the soil of your heart with honesty, forgiveness and diligence? Ask Him to help you watch over your heart so that you can take care of it.
8. How would your life be different if you entered the rest that God has provided for you through forgiveness?
9. Do you look forward to making space for grace in your heart for others?
10. How can you celebrate your life today?

A Kept Heart Brings Life Study Guide

Prayer

Dear Lord,

Help me to exercise my faith in You and turn my back on the past. I renounce sin, bondage, suffering, sorrow, abandonment, betrayal, and the impact of these things on my life. I renounce everything that drew me back into the pain that I experienced. I choose to focus on You as You release me from unforgiveness. I choose to walk in forgiveness and live in the present. I am humbled and grateful for the peace and rest you provide that ministers to my soul. Thank you for helping me to make space for your grace and forgiveness in my life.

In the name of Jesus,

Amen