



FRESH START

Processing the Issues
of Your Heart

LEADER'S GUIDE



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FRESH START

PROCESSING THE ISSUES OF YOUR HEART

A process in helping you resolve issues
of offense, hurt and loss

**"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."
Proverbs 4:23 (NIV84)**

If YOUR heart was the only wellspring (drinking source) from which others could drink, how "healthy" would they be?

A sobering question, isn't it? But, whose heart hasn't been affected by someone or something? Even if your wellspring has become "polluted" with unforgiveness or bitterness, you can still have a "fresh start" for your heart!

It is our prayer that as you **process the issues of your heart** by writing out your responses to the questions on the following pages, that you will be free from your past, not just survive, but thrive in the present, and look forward to a hope-filled future!

Also, please note **The Ultimate Fresh Start** on page 20. For your process to lead to true freedom, and a *forgiven and forgiving* lifestyle, it will be imperative that you experience your *Ultimate Fresh Start* prior to **Part 5-FORGIVE**. Otherwise, you will not be able to give away what you have not received.

Remember, **IT'S NEVER TOO LATE!**

Forgiven, forgiving and free,
Pastor Steve and Mindy Peterson
Founders of Fresh Start for All Nations

Leader's Guide Introduction:

Now that you have processed the issues of your own heart, and are experiencing newfound freedom from the effects of offense, hurt or loss, you are ready to "give away" what you have received, and lead or coach someone else through his/her own process.

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God." (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4 NIV)

As you lead or coach a person through this process, it is essential that you are submitted to the Holy Spirit's direction. It is very normal for you as a leader to feel inadequate. That is why it is so important to believe that your adequacy comes from God.

"Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." (2 Corinthians 3:4-6 NASB)

"Pay Me What You Owe Me!" (Illustration)

An effective illustration that will capture the attention of seminar participants before opening their booklet is the "Parable of the Unforgiving Servant." It is intended to give a "big picture" perspective to this six-part process. It follows the parable found on page 12 of the booklet, or in Matthew 18:21-35. To present this dramatization, you will need the following cast of characters: a master, an unforgiving servant, a fellow servant, some bystanders and 8 jailers. The presentation follows the story Jesus shares regarding the unforgiving servant -- a servant who didn't recognize the massive debt he owed and that he could never repay (evidenced by him asking for more time rather than mercy). The most important elements in this illustration to communicate are: (1) the unforgiving servant's constant request for more time and not for mercy, (2) the master's willingness to forgive, (3) the unforgiving servant's lack of forgiveness toward his fellow servant, which (4) ultimately is reported back to the master who turns the unforgiving servant over to the (jailers/tormentors). At the end of the dramatization, it is very effective for the unforgiving servant to emerge from the "circle of jailers" and shout, "Stop!" and then proceed to say to the audience of participants, "Are you in the jail of unforgiveness?" This can be a perfect transition to Part One of the booklet, presenting Processing the Issues of Your Heart as a pathway and process to get out of the jail of unforgiveness.

Part 1: OFFENSE/HURT/LOSS

WHO OR WHAT HAS OFFENDED OR HURT YOU? OR... WHO OR WHAT HAVE YOU LOST?

“Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind...”

Psalm 26:2 (NIV)

Begin by identifying areas of offense, hurt or loss in your life.

(a) List specific offenses or hurts, and the person(s) involved:

- People who have rejected you in some way, and how
- People or situations where you have been violated or abused
- Conflicts involving family, friends, work, church or others
- Divorce or separation
- Other

BIG IDEA: WHO OR WHAT IS IN YOUR GAP?

Overview:

The **GAP** is a key perspective in helping an individual decide who or what he/she is going to process. The idea here is to help the participant avoid comparing the person or situation with others (horizontally). There is always someone who has had it better or worse. If the participant compares horizontally, he will tend to minimize or make excuses for the offending person, and therefore never process the offense, hurt or loss. By comparing his offender or situation with God's character or design, he is “comparing up” (vertically) and taking the other person's motives, abilities and even how the person processing has been affected (horizontally), totally out of the equation.

Moving forward in the participant's process becomes an issue of processing the **GAP** - any and all specific ways that the other person is not like our Heavenly Father, and any loss that our Heavenly Father allowed that which would not be consistent with His intended design and character. (REFER TO ILLUSTRATION ON PAGE 15)

Remember:

- As the leader, it is imperative to begin this part and every part of Processing the Issues Of Your Heart in prayer.
- In each part of the process, ALWAYS be sure to read the Bible verses aloud and stress the significance of each one. You can ask the group or participant to participate in explaining what it means to him or her.
- Encourage participants in your group to be thorough, and to think in terms of themes or categories so that they don't bog down in the details.
- The leader/coach will facilitate “an interactive process” until the participant decides who or what is in his GAP. It's very important that a participant does not choose to process himself. Point out that by going through this process he is automatically taking responsibility for his actions and is including himself. If he were to choose to process himself, the logical conclusion of that choice would be to forgive himself, and there is no Biblical basis to do so.

*Please refer to and utilize the participant guide on the web/app as needed.

(b) List of significant losses that you have experienced in your life:

- Loss of job
- Loss of health
- Loss of a relationship due to conflict, separation, divorce or death
- Loss of a dream for your life or your future involving marriage, children or career
- Other

(c) From your previous responses, choose one person or loss to process.

List the offenses, hurts or loss regarding this person or loss.

“Unforgiveness Train” (Illustration):

Sometimes an individual has difficulty deciding which person to process. Sometimes it is because he has had many people who have offended or hurt him, or maybe he believes he has no one to forgive. The “Unforgiveness Train” is an illustration that can help. Begin by asking for a volunteer to step forward, referring to him/her as the first person in your life who hurt or offended you: your “first wound” (father, mother or significant other).

Begin to verbally express various ways that person hurt or offended you, and conclude your rant with the repeated words, “Pay me what you owe me!” (This statement relates to the “Parable of the Unforgiving Servant.” on page 12) Then, add another participant (standing behind the first person), and label him as another person from your life who also hurt and offended you in some of the same ways as the first person. With a raised voice, verbally express the many ways you’ve been offended, hurt and affected. Conclude by saying, “Pay me what you owe me!”

Continue to add more people, one at a time. As each one is added, place them at the back of the line and have them place their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. (forming a “train”) Continue to add up to six people total, all representing relevant central themes such as rejection, abandonment, performance-based acceptance, etc., which started and have continued to grow since that “first wound.” Conclude this illustration by saying, repeatedly in a raised voice, “Pay me what you owe me!” While saying this, lead your train of people around the room with you at the front, placing your hands on the shoulders of the person who represents your “first wound” and walking backwards - while focusing on all those people that have hurt, offended and affected you.

Remember:

Encourage the participant to choose only ONE person or loss to process.

Part 2: AFFECT

HOW HAVE YOU BEEN AFFECTED?

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.” **Psalm 139:23** (NIV)

How has this specific offense, hurt or loss affected you?

(a) What have your thoughts been?

(b) What have your thoughts been toward the person involved (as applicable)?

BIG IDEA: WHAT IS IN YOUR HEART?

Overview:

Now that the **GAP** and the offender or loss has been identified, this section allows both the participant and the facilitator to know how his/her heart has been affected.

“I Can Handle It!” (Illustration):

Many times people are not in touch with how an offense, hurt or loss has affected them. This illustration can be very helpful: “I can handle it!” Ask for someone to come forward who believes he is strong; perhaps the strongest person in the room. As he comes forward, hand him a water bottle, unopened and full of water. (A water bottle is ideal, but it could be any object that is not too heavy.) Ask him if it is heavy.

Typically he will say, “No, not at all.” Then, ask him to take the bottle and hold it with an outstretched arm. At first, he can “handle it” with no problem. However, in time the water bottle becomes quite heavy. And, in a relatively short amount of time, he will give up holding the weight because of the increasing stress it’s putting on his arm.

This simple illustration shows how we might be able to handle the effects of the **GAP** for a while, but eventually we won’t be able to handle the weight of the effects in our own strength.



(c) What have your feelings been?

The following is a list of words to help you identify your past and present feelings in relationship to your specific offense, hurt or loss.

Circle those that **most** apply to you:

Abandoned	Dumb	Invisible	Out of Control	Trapped
Angry	Erased	Inadequate	Powerless	Ugly
Anxious	Failure	Inferior	Rage	Unclean
Betrayed	Fat	Insecure	Rejected	Unloved
Bitter	Fearful	Jealous	Resentful	Unprotected
Consumed	Guarded	Judged	Sad	Unwanted
Condemned	Guilty	Lonely	Shamed	Used
Depressed	Hate	Loser	Stuck	Victimized
Dirty	Helpless	Manipulated	Stupid	Voiceless
Distrustful	Hopeless	Not Valued	Tolerated	Worthless

Using the words that you have circled above, or other words that apply, write out how this specific offense, hurt or loss has affected you.

Remember:

- It is vital for the participant to understand how he has been affected.
- Encourage the participant to be specific and transparent with his heart. This is critically important.
- Using the word bank on page 5 is very helpful in discovering how he has been affected. However, the word bank is not meant to be exhaustive, so encourage your participant to expand beyond it if necessary.
- Ask your participant to identify his top two or three two and explain. Using the following starters can help as well.
 - *I feel _____ because...*
 - *I felt _____ when...*
- Emphasize to the participant the importance of being detailed and specific in identifying his thoughts and feelings as part of the discovery of how he has truly been affected. Remind him that his heart matters...it matters to God.

Part 3: RESPONSE

HOW HAVE YOU RESPONDED TO THIS SPECIFIC OFFENSE, HURT OR LOSS?

“See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”
Psalm 139:24 (NIV)

(a) What have you said?

Include things that you have said to yourself or others about the person involved, yourself, God or the situation.

BIG IDEA: WHAT HAVE YOU DECIDED?

Overview:

This part of the process provides an initial opportunity for the participant to take responsibility for his response(s). The focus of the first three parts of **Processing the Issues of Your Heart** is one of **DISCOVERY**:

- Part 1. “Who or what is in your **GAP**?”
- Part 2. “What is in your heart?”
- Part 3. “What have you decided?”



(b) What have you done?

(c) What have you decided?

Include things you have decided about yourself, God, the offending person or the loss you have experienced, and any judgments and vows you have made.

Remember:

- For part (c) - “What have you decided?” - help the participant identify vows (promises to self), that have come out of a judgmental attitude.
 - I’ll never trust anyone again...
 - I’ll never forgive that person...
 - I’ll never let anyone hurt me again...
- See **(Matthew 7:1-5)**.
- Help the participant to see that these decisions of making “promises to self” (vows made out of judgements) are really expressions of control and self-sufficiency, versus dependency on God.
- In either a seminar format or processing group, give opportunity for the person(s) involved to pray and ask the Lord for His forgiveness for making these “promises to self.” This should be followed by the participant telling the Lord that he is willing to be hurt again, and when that happens, he will entrust the care of his heart to the Lord.
- Realize that the participant may not yet be willing to take responsibility for his part. It is important for you as a leader to continue to take a “no pressure, just opportunity” approach as you coach and encourage throughout this process.

QUESTION FOR EACH PERSON IN YOUR PROCESSING GROUP:

“In two to three sentences, please share how your heart has been affected by what you have been hearing from the person who has been processing in your group. Please keep in mind this is not a time to share advice with this person or to share how the Lord has been speaking to you independently of this group, but briefly and specifically how your heart has been affected by what you have been hearing from the person who has been processing.”

Part 4: POUR OUT YOUR HEART

POUR OUT YOUR HEART TO THE LORD.

“Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to him, for God is our refuge.” **Psalm 62:8** (NIV)

“I cry aloud to the LORD; I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy. I pour out my complaint before him; before him I tell my trouble.” **Psalm 142:1-2** (NIV)

(a) Pour out your heart to the Lord. Write in the space below exactly how you feel.

Lord, this is how I feel:

BIG IDEA: GO VERTICAL! -

Overview:

At this point in the process, the participant shifts from sharing horizontally with his coach or processing group to pouring out his heart to God, thus “Going Vertical!”

It is absolutely vital that this part of the process is fully understood and applied. It includes BOTH pouring out one’s heart to God AND giving thanks to God.

Don’t assume that anyone you lead or coach understands or is familiar with these concepts. Remember that some participants may be followers of Jesus and some may not. Make no assumptions.

Start with encouraging the participant to pour out his heart to the Lord, including his complaint and any poison that is in his heart. This is an essential prelude to GIVING THANKS, which doesn’t require him to FEEL thankful.



(b) Express your unmet desires to the Lord.

Lord, this is what I'm disappointed or upset about, or wish would have happened (or not have happened):

Remember:

Encourage the participant to express his true, current desires along with the ideal or best case scenario, to the Lord.

(c) Express your current desires to the Lord:

Lord, I desire:

A Grateful Heart

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A Thank Offering

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(d) Choose to give thanks to the Lord.

“...give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:18 ^(NIV)

“...always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Ephesians 5:20 ^(NIV)

“Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High; call upon Me in the day of trouble; I shall rescue you, and you will honor Me.... He who offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving honors Me; And to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God.”

Psalms 50:14-15, 23 ^(NASB)

“I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD.”

Psalms 116:17 ^(NIV)

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

1 Corinthians 1:18 ^(NIV)

“We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son...” Romans 8:28-29 ^(NASB)

Tell the Lord in writing that you are choosing to give thanks, that you are surrendering to His sovereignty over the situation and the circumstances, and that you are trusting Him in however He uses it in your life for His purposes, for your good, and for His glory.

Lord, I choose to give thanks...

For more information Giving Thanks, please refer to part 4d in the participant guide (found online).

Remember:

- Explain the difference between Being Grateful and what it means to Give Thanks.
- Giving Thanks is not about what we feel grateful for, but about surrendering and submitting to the sovereignty of God in all and over all circumstances, even when the circumstances are extremely difficult and the outcome is uncertain.
- Giving Thanks does not require us to feel grateful.
- Giving thanks is about a heart posture of trust.
- When we Give Thanks in all circumstances, we are exchanging our desires for God’s will by submitting to whatever He wants to do in and through the circumstances, for our good and His glory.

“Settle It At The Extreme” (Illustration):

This is a very helpful perspective to present at this time. It is meant to take any situation the participant is going through and extending that circumstance to an extreme scenario. Once envisioned, the participant confronts the question, “Is Jesus enough for me in this extreme worst case scenario, and would I be willing to GIVE THANKS and ask Him to conform me into His likeness no matter what lies ahead and no matter the outcome?”

If a participant can honestly answer, “yes,” to that question, then every scenario of a lesser degree would also be a “yes!”

Part 5: FORGIVE

Cancel the debt!

FORGIVE THE ONE WHO HAS OFFENDED OR HURT YOU.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, ‘Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. 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. The servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’

**The servant’s master took pity on him,
CANCELED THE DEBT and let him go.**

But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii. He grabbed him and began to choke him. **‘Pay back what you owe me!’** he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

When the other servants saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’

In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”

Matthew 18:21-35 (NIV)



BIG IDEA: CANCEL THE DEBT! -

Overview:

- It is vital that the participant has come to saving faith and is FORGIVEN by the Lord before embarking on this part of the process. A person can’t give what he hasn’t fully received. He can’t forgive unless he is forgiven. If he hasn’t received forgiveness from the Lord Jesus Christ, he really doesn’t know what forgiveness is.
- This underlines why Pouring Out Your Heart, and especially Giving Thanks is such vital preparation for this part of the process.
- So, if the participant has not come to saving faith, go back to the Discovery parts of the process (Parts One, Two and Three) and further engage the heart of the participant until he is willing and able to “Go Vertical” and submit to the authority and sovereignty of God.
- The “YOU can be FORGIVEN” content on Page 20 can also be a tremendous help to you as you lead a participant to saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The Forgiving Servant” (Illustration):

“The Forgiving Servant” is a shortened version of the “Unforgiving Servant,” (see Page 1) that was presented earlier. For this illustration, you will only need the master, the servant who owes the huge debt (he could never pay) and the fellow servant who owes the previously mentioned servant a smaller debt. The illustration is meant to parallel the Unforgiving Servant parable, by acting out the story with the servant asking for mercy instead of “more time.” As the master forgives the servant’s debt, the servant enthusiastically thanks the master for such a gift of grace! Then, the servant, having been forgiven such a huge debt, quickly finds his fellow servant and forgives him fully. The drama concludes with the two servants celebrating the gift of grace and forgiveness.

“Shark hook” (Illustration):

Hold up the shark hook for all to see. Ask, “who is on your hook?” Invite processing group or seminar participants to write on a piece of blank paper the name of the person he has decided to process or a loss. Then, invite him to come forward and place his piece of paper on the shark hook, acknowledging who or what has been on their “hook”, and that they are now taking it off of their hook, and placing it on God’s hook.

(a) Take responsibility for your sinful responses.

Write out your confession of unforgiveness to the Lord, along with related wrong attitudes and or responses.

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

Lord, would you forgive me for my sinful actions and attitudes...

Lord, would You forgive me for my judgments and vows...

Remember:

It is vital for the participant to take ownership for any wrong/sinful responses made in response to the person who hurt or offended him from his or her responses in part 3. Lead the participant to acknowledge and confess each one, asking the Lord for forgiveness.

- 3a) *Things he or she has said.*
- 3b) *Things he or she has done in response.*
- 3c) *Things he or she has decided, including judgments and vows.*

Judgment = a decision made about someone or oneself.

Vow = a promise to self, a contract to live by, and a statement of control

Repenting of a Judgment

(see Matthew 7:1-5)

Example: “*Lord, I confess that I have judged _____. Please forgive me.*”

Repenting of a Vow

It's important that the participant not only repents, but also *renounces* each vow in the name of Jesus. To renounce means to “sever any bond”, or “break agreement with” a promise made to self.

The process looks like the following:

- Repent for making the specific vow
 - “*Lord, forgive me for saying that “I am not loved.”*”
- Renounce it in the Name of Jesus
 - “*In the name of Jesus, I renounce the vow that I am not loved.”*”
- Replace it with the Truth of God's Word.
 - “*I replace it with truth, that I am a dearly loved child of God.”*”

“Ripping up the Contract” (Illustration)

For this illustration, have the person write down each vow they have made on a piece of paper as a statement. “I am not loved.” Then have them make a signature line, and then sign it. After they have looked at the vow or contract they have made, have the participant rip it up to shreds.” This is what it looks like to renounce a vow. This can also be done while renouncing each vow.

(b) Choose to forgive the person who has hurt or offended you.

Write out your prayer to the Lord expressing your decision to forgive. Include the specifics of those hurts or offenses and how they have affected you in the past, are affecting you in the present, and may affect you in the future.

Lord, I choose to forgive...

Remember:

- It is important to stress that the one who forgives (cancels the debt) is the one who really pays. Jesus, of course paid the **ultimate price** for our debt of sin.
- When the participant forgives, it costs him humbling himself, becoming of no reputation, and offering up to his Heavenly Father all the ways he has been affected by the offense or hurt.
- When the participant forgives, he is making an exchange: he is loving Jesus and making Him more important than the respect or apology he thinks he deserves. He is declaring that Jesus is more important than justice or fairness. He is making Jesus more important than anything or anyone.
- Only Jesus satisfies; only Jesus fills the **GAP**.
- Also, be sure to stress that the one who forgives is the one who is freed!

(Part 3c below is found on page 15 on the booklet.)

c.) Declare to the Lord:

I cancel the debt! For my sake, they owe me nothing!"



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GOD'S DESIGN

GAP 

YOUR EXPERIENCE

GOD'S DESIGN

JESUS

YOUR EXPERIENCE

Part 6: RELEASE

Let God handle it!

RELEASE THE OFFENSE, HURT OR LOSS TO THE LORD!

"Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall. But you, O God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of corruption; bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in you." Psalm 55:22-23 ^(NIV)

"Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is Mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:16-21 ^(NIV)

"...and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously." 1 Peter 2:23 ^(NASB)

(a) Entrust the person and/or the situation to the Lord.

Write in the form of a prayer who or what you are now entrusting to the Lord.

BIG IDEA:
LET GOD HANDLE IT!

Overview:

Though experiencing forgiveness is a vital outcome of **Processing the Issues of Your Heart**, perhaps there are still lingering effects from how the participant was affected by the offense, hurt or loss. These effects can be surrendered to the Lord.

An initial aspect of freedom comes when the participant fully forgives the person in their **GAP** and/or fully surrenders to the **sovereignty of God** through "Giving Thanks" in response to a loss.

Even **MORE** freedom can come when the participant forgives the offender for the effects of the offense or hurt, and/or entrusts the effects of the offense or loss to the Lord and decides to "let God handle it."



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(b) Bless and pray for the person who has offended or hurt you.

“Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing....’”
Luke 23:34 (NIV)

“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you...”
Matthew 5:44 (NKJV)

Lord, I choose to bless and pray for...

“The Bell” (Illustration)

Sometimes a participant will say that he has forgiven another person, but still feels pain in his heart. With that in mind, a participant often will ask, “Does that mean I haven’t truly forgiven?” The Bell Illustration shows that sometimes the healing of a person’s heart is not instantaneous, but may take some time.

Ask for someone to come forward who has a BIG VOICE. Ask him to imitate the sound of a bell in a tall tower. Then, ask for five or six participants to come forward to form a “human rope” that you will attach to THE BELL. You, the leader, will pull on the human rope loudly declaring “pay me what you owe me!” As the bell is DONGING, and you and the human rope are swaying back and forth, you loudly declare, “Pay me what you owe me!”

So far, this illustration is presenting a picture of unforgiveness. But then, as you verbalize that you are **Giving Thanks, Forgiving and Letting Go** of the effects by letting go of the rope, the volume of the bell gradually decreases, as the human rope gradually sways less and less, until the bell is silent.

This illustration highlights that until you forgive, healing can’t begin. After you forgive, healing can begin, and you can start the process of becoming free from the effects of the offense, hurt or loss.

QUESTION FOR EACH PERSON IN YOUR PROCESSING GROUP:

“In two to three sentences, please share how your heart has been affected by what you have been hearing from the person who has been processing in your group. Please keep in mind this is not a time to share advice with this person or to share how the Lord has been speaking to you independently of this group, but briefly and specifically how your heart has been affected by what you have been hearing from the person who has been processing.”

(c) Express to the Lord in prayer your desire to actively live out the truth God has shown you in your process.

“We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,” 2 Corinthians 10:5 ^(NASB)

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Romans 12:2 ^(NASB)

“May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.” Psalm 19:14 ^(NIV)

Lord, help me to take my thoughts captive to obey You. From this point forward, I choose to renew my mind according to Your Word.

Closure:

For closure purposes, we want to encourage the participant to take his or her thoughts captive to obey the Lord.

What does this mean?

The enemy will try to re-infect our hearts. This is where the participant will need to remember that he or she have chosen to forgive the person who offended them, that they are not going to listen to the lies of the enemy. He will try to remind them again of all the hurt they once experienced. But they have forgiven! Help them remember to stand, and hold fast to their decision!

Remind them to resist the enemy to take up an offense again, and praise God for the victory He has given them through forgiveness!



NOTES

THE ULTIMATE FRESH START

Before you can truly walk in freedom, you must first experience the Ultimate Fresh Start – *being forgiven by God.*

Forgiveness is God's gift to you, canceling the debt of your sin – not because you've earned it, but because of His love and mercy. But God's heart isn't just to forgive you — it's to restore you and bring healing and wholeness to every area of your life. And that restoration starts with something vital: Repentance.

"But unless you repent, you too will all perish." Luke 13:3 (NIV)

Repentance is all about a total change of heart - turning from a desire to do *YOUR will* to a desire to do *HIS will*, from a "me first" life to a "Jesus first" life.

This turning point is often marked by sorrow. But there's a big difference between feeling *regret* over the painful consequences of your choices and *conviction* about the choices themselves. The writers of Scripture call the first "worldly sorrow", which leads only to more misery and regret. The second is "godly sorrow," which leads to repentance - opening the door to forgiveness and real freedom.

"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death." 2 Corinthians 7:10 (NIV)

How to be Forgiven by God

- **Confess** the "me first" attitudes that have ruled your life - pride, bitterness, jealousy, unforgiveness, control... acknowledging that these things are sin, not just bad habits or mistakes, but rebellion against God.
- **Repent** and turn from these sins. Ask God to forgive you for each one expressed in thought, word, or deed in your life, and thank Him for sending His Son, Jesus, to die for all your sins.
- **Surrender** your life to Jesus as Lord. Tell Him you are yielding to His supreme power and authority, and that you are ready for Him to make any changes He wants to make in your life.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

"That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. Romans 10:9-10. (NIV)

Now... you can forgive others as you have been forgiven!

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)

Overview:

Often, someone will ask, "Is ***Processing the Issues of Your Heart*** only for those who are followers of Jesus Christ - for those who are FORGIVEN?" The answer, of course, is that this process is for everyone. We don't start with whether a person believes in Jesus or not. We start with the person's heart.

Remember:

- With that in mind, you can certainly refer to this page at any time, especially if the participant is seeking or inquiring. But you are encouraged to wait until at least Part Four of this process, on Page 11 (Giving Thanks) before you introduce the truth and perspective of being truly FORGIVEN on God's terms.
- The common ground of being FORGIVEN and Part4/Giving Thanks is surrender and, **submitting to the sovereignty and authority of God.** Therefore, if a participant has not experienced being FORGIVEN by God, he won't be able to **Give Thanks, Forgive or Let God Handle It!**

For more on The Ultimate Fresh Start go to:
www.TheUltimateFreshStart.org

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VERSION 07082025

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