

*3 SPIRITUAL RESET
~~#4~~ – FORGIVENESS STEP BY STEP

*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.
 Forgive as the Lord forgave you.* *Colossians 3:13*

Learn the Lingo: Forgiveness – 1) To give up resentment against or the desire to punish; stop being angry with; pardon. 2) To give up all claim to punish, or exact penalty for (an offense); overlook. 3) To cancel a debt.

Step 1: Admit the Need to Forgive

- Evaluate what happened and why if you can.
- Don't deny that it happened, or that it hurt you.
- Don't blame yourself where it's not warranted.
- Don't excuse the other person's behavior if it's serious and intentional.
- Go through the grief process on your loss and hurt.

(Jesus said) For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Matthew 6:14-15

Step 2: Remember Why We Should Forgive

- Forgiveness is God's best way to settle the debt – not “payback”.
- Forgiveness frees us to go on with our lives. There are spiritual, emotional, and health benefits. Forgiveness heals us from our hurts.
- Forgiveness is the obligation of the forgiven. Because we are forgiven by God, we give the same grace-gift to others.
- Forgiveness is a powerful testimony to the world to God's love.

I can do everything through Him Who gives me strength.

Philippians 4:13

Step 3: Do the Supernatural Forgiveness Process

- Pray for God's help to remember who and what is to be forgiven, and the power and guidance to do so.
- Choose, by an act of your will, to forgive the person(s) once and for all.
- Release that person from the debt you feel is owed you for the offense. Say: “You are free and forgiven.”
- Pray that God will continually free you from hurt and memories. Choose “not to remember”.
- Remember that for serious hurts, forgiveness is a process. It can be painful, tiring, and seemingly unending. Don't give up – keep it up!
- Move forward with God's great plan for your life. Don't live in the past.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

James 1:2-4

Though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed.

I Peter 1:6b-7

Step 4: View the Whole Event as a Tool for Spiritual Growth

- This does **not** mean what was done to you was okay, or caused by God.
- It does mean that God is using your experience to help you grow **spiritually**.
- This turns us from a negative self-focus to a positive spiritual **focus**.
- Realize that spiritual understanding of the event may take **time**.

*(Love) always protects, **always trusts**, always hopes, always perseveres.*

I Corinthians 13:7

Step 5: Learn to Trust Again

- ***Satan's Goal*** – For you to not **trust** in people to protect yourself from further hurt. This will neutralize your Christian influence.
- To trust the offender again, it takes the **willingness** of the offender to win back the trust.
- Wise and fair expectations should be set during a trial period, and after, to win trust **back**.
- In the future, people **should** be trusted; but cautiously and with discernment.

Inner Action – Applying These Truths Today

- 1) What are the reasons you have resisted the steps of forgiveness in the past?
- 2) Who are the people you need to forgive in your life and why?
- 3) Which steps are most difficult for you? Why?
- 4) Why is the “grief” process for your “loss” important to do?
- 5) Do the reasons we should forgive motivate you to begin the process? Why or why not?
- 6) Why do you think people will sometimes deny or excuse the offense and hurt?