

# Forgiveness

None of us is immune to hurt, humiliation, rejection and spiritual suffering. These are part of our normal interactions and relationships with people. Almost daily we will encounter some hurt, and sometimes we react to this. One of the most common forms of reaction is to take offence, to become bitter, and this may lead to unwillingness to forgive.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:12-15: *“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors... For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.”* Read it again, very carefully. It is obvious that forgiveness plays a very important part in prayer. *“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”* (Matthew 5:23-24).

When we pray with unforgiveness in our hearts, we cannot pray with boldness, and the unforgiveness creates a barrier in our prayers. Jesus tells us that our Heavenly Father will not forgive us, if we refuse to forgive others.

Make time to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you if there is someone whom you have not forgiven and towards whom you feel bitterness. Do not delay to forgive.

## **There are different forms of forgiveness:**

Often it is necessary for me to *ask forgiveness of someone for what I did to them*. Jabez prayed in 1 Chronicles 4:10 that God would help him not to be the cause of pain. Sometimes, we do cause pain to others and we need to ask their forgiveness.

The **second** form of forgiveness is to *forgive yourself for what you have done*. We may have caused much pain and heartache to someone, and we find it difficult to forgive ourselves for what we have done. It is necessary to forgive yourself, in order to once again live a life of spiritual freedom. Know that God forgives you, therefore you may forgive yourself. (1 John 1:9).

**Thirdly**, it is necessary for you to *forgive each person whom you feel has trespassed against you*. It is a good practice to set aside time to reflect on your day whether there is any form of bitterness or unforgiveness that has crept into your heart. (Proverbs 20:22; 24:29).

The **last form** of forgiveness may sound strange: *Sometimes we may get angry at God!* We experience rebellion or bitterness. This may be because things have happened that we do not understand, or we feel God should have intervened in a particular situation. In such instances, to use ‘human terms’, we must ‘forgive God’. What we are actually doing, though, is recognizing that we have stood in rebellion towards Him, and now we re-align ourselves with Him, and once again surrender to Him, knowing that He knows best, even when we don’t understand it.

I want to encourage you to come before God in your quiet time every day and ask the Holy Spirit to show you if you have any form of unforgiveness that you are harbouring, and if there is anyone of whom you need to ask forgiveness. To most this brings great liberty. Take time to examine yourself in the light of these different forms of unforgiveness.