

## APPENDIX 1

# Seven Steps of Forgiveness

### **1. Choose to forgive.**

Forgiveness begins with a simple decision to obey God and forgive those who have hurt me. Jesus made it clear in Matthew 18:35 that this decision to forgive is to be from the heart. We are to forgive wholeheartedly, not holding back or keeping any resentment. Forgiveness starts not with feelings, but with a decision. Verbalize this decision by faith and confess aloud, "In Jesus' name, I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_."

### **2. Confess your sin to God.**

Ephesians 4:32 reminds us we are to forgive one another, even as God through Christ forgave us. Even more, God desires for all people to know forgiveness. He sent His Son, Jesus, to die to make that possible. Withholding forgiveness can stop people from experiencing God's forgiveness. Yet God is always ready to forgive those who call on Him. (See Psalm 86:5.) Accept unforgiveness as sin and confess it to God. Then receive God's forgiveness, accepting it just as you would accept a gift from someone.

### **3. Ask forgiveness from those you wronged.**

We are responsible to restore relationship with anyone who has anything against us. (See Matthew 5:23, 24.) Accept responsibility for the wrong you have done and ask for forgiveness. If you are unaware of what you did wrong, ask God to show you. If you do not have a genuine sorrow or repentance, stop first and prayerfully ask God to show you how you hurt that person and how they may have felt. Allow

God to give you a whole new understanding and sensitivity toward that person.

**4. Ask God to bless the person who hurt you.**

“Bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you” (Luke 6:28 NKJV). Ask God to truly bless the person who hurt you. As you do this, follow the example of Jesus in asking God to bless him!

**5. Do something nice for the person who hurt you.**

“Do good to those who hate you” (Luke 6:27 NKJV). “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21 NKJV). This could be accomplished by complimenting that person or serving them in some way. Ask God; He will show you something that will be meaningful to that person.

**6. Accept the person the way they are, even if they are wrong.**

Do not defend what they do, but defend them. You do not necessarily need to approve of what they are doing, but treat them with dignity, respect, love and kindness anyway. “Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God” (Romans 15:7 NKJV).

**7. Look at this person through the eyes of faith.**

Do not concentrate on areas of weakness, sin or irritation. Rather, concentrate on seeing this person as God designed them. Follow Abraham’s example, and by faith see things that are not as they appear. (See Romans 4:16-21.) Begin to think and speak positively about this person. (See 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.) Love “believes all things and hopes all things.”