

Overcoming Unforgiveness

by Dr. Charles Stanley –InTouch.org

Read | **Matthew 6: 9-15**

Do you constantly struggle to forgive people who have wronged you? If so, you may be of the opinion that forgiveness is simply a feeling one can have in the face of conflict—and that you are incapable of experiencing it. If that's your mindset, you are operating with a faulty understanding. Genuine forgiveness is not a feeling, but an action.

If you find it hard to forgive others, the following four guidelines can help:

1. Acknowledge and confess an unforgiving spirit. No, it is not always easy to forgive. We are sometimes the target of tremendously hurtful offenses. However, we are not accountable for other people's behavior; we are responsible only for our own. God commanded us to be loving, forgiving people. If we hold a grudge that is our problem and no one else's—we must repent of this sin and ask God to help our unforgiveness.
2. Release the other person. Make a decision to release the offender in your mind. If you find yourself reliving details of the upsetting behavior, force yourself to stop.
3. Forgive the offender forgetfully. By keeping details fresh in your mind, you trap yourself in a cycle of pain. Choose instead to separate the individual from the painful memory.
4. Forgive with finality. Genuine forgiveness is complete. This means that you cannot “forgive” someone and then continually bring the subject up. Forgive him or her, and then move on.

If you've been holding onto bitterness, pray for the strength to forgive. Then do it—without delay.