



## The Difficulty in Forgiveness

Adapted from “Healing Life’s Hurts through Forgiveness” series by Dr. George O. Wood

Hopefully most of us wash at least once a day. When I was a kid living on the Tibet and China border we had a bath once a week. I thought that was heaven to only have to take a bath once a week. Sometimes, Mom would go to work on my ears. That hurt. It wouldn’t hurt nearly so bad if on a daily basis I had washed but I had let it accumulate. The Tibetans themselves never washed from the time they were born until they die. It was against their religious behavior. Actually, it was good climatically. They lived in the open air in cold weather. If they were washing, they would probably be catching pneumonia all the time. To have gotten one of them really clean you would have had to have used a Brillo pad.

I sometimes think when we have accumulated hurts in our lives that we have not disposed of that we have not been cleansed from. Like a daily washing, “If we confess our sins, he’s faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” If we do not do that on a regular basis we can accumulate those things in our life. When we want to get them cleansed, there is some Brillo pad work by the Holy Spirit that may tenderize us a bit. I am convinced that is one reason why when people are going through a real cathartic release, a real forgiveness in their life, a lot of tears are shed. There is a whole lot of work being done. When we feel the tenderness that is underneath the sickness of grime and hard shell we feel cleansed and washed inside.

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## COURAGE

**C1:** Describe a time in your life when you found it difficult to forgive someone? Have you allowed your pride to get in the way simply because of the desire to be right? Why?

**C2:** Forgiveness has two parts: forgiving and being forgiven. Do you have difficulty being forgiven? Do you hold your past failures within your heart creating distance from others and possibly God? If so, why?

**C3:** Answer these five statements. Regarding forgiveness, do you:

- Have a sense of freedom?
  
- Feel a past weight has lifted?
  
- Feel a sense of strength?
  
- Feel cleansed and washed inside?
  
- Feel good about standing before God?
  
- Write out how you can change any answer from a “no” to a “yes.”

- What are you struggling with most in forgiving or being forgiven from things in your past?

**C4:** Spend fifteen minutes a day for the next thirty days asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to your heart things you are holding on to that need forgiveness. Write down what you sense He is saying to you.

## STRENGTH

**S1:** Read and answer the following.

- Do you have an altered relationship between yourself and another due to unforgiveness? Write out the cause.
- Have you been carrying around the weight of unforgiveness and feel as if your strength to carry it is slowly slipping away? Do you feel that it is God calling you to release that weight? Write out how you are going to accomplish this.

**S2:** Read and answer the following.

**Psalm 51: 1-15 (ESV)**

- What do you glean from these verses?
- Describe a time in your life when you felt the cleansing of God as you let go of unforgiveness in your life?

**S3:** If being forgiven and forgiving others should be a way of life, answer the following.

- On a scale of 1-4, with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, rate yourself on how well you walk daily in being forgiven and offering forgiveness to others. Write out a plan to improve.
- Describe a time in your life when you have not felt like forgiving.

**S4:** In the next thirty days, spend fifteen minutes a day asking the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any area of your life in which you need to apply forgiveness. Write down what you sense. Ask the Holy Spirit to begin the healing process of forgiveness in your life so you can do your part in the forgiveness equation.

## ENDURANCE

**E1:** How would you share with another man about the difficulty of forgiveness?

**E2:** In the next thirty days, discuss these five statements with three men. Make sure to include how you could disciple another man on the importance of how to answer them. How do you answer these questions when it comes to forgiveness in your own life? Use your life experiences.

- I feel a sense of freedom
- I feel a weight has lifted
- I feel a sense of strength regarding forgiveness
- I feel cleansed and washed inside
- I feel good about standing before God
- What stood out to you in these conversations?

**E3:** Read and answer the following.

### **Zechariah 3:1-4 (ESV)**

- One area you might feel vulnerable is being open and honest with where you are regarding forgiveness and the unforgiveness in our pasts. How do these verses help you face your past sins? How can you begin to disciple men in opening up and being set free when it comes to healing life's hurts?

**E4:** Have you ever experienced anger, hurt and apathy when it comes to forgiveness? How can you find the endurance in Christ to act in those areas of your life regarding giving and receiving forgiveness?



**E5:** In the next thirty days find three men and discuss the difficulties and struggles of forgiveness. What did you glean from these conversations?