

FORGIVENESS

Deciding that someone who has wronged you doesn't have to pay

Read Proverbs 17:9

DAY 1

Forgiveness is hard. Sometimes we'd rather be right and make a point. We want the other person to understand why we're hurt and to somehow guarantee they won't ever mess up and hurt us again. Since no one is perfect, eventually the people you spend time with will mess up and those mess-ups might really mess up your friendship.

When it comes to forgiveness, being right is never more important than your friendship. Winning an argument isn't the goal, protecting the relationship is. If you keep bringing it up to make the other person feel bad, you'll never be close to that person. That's why it's so important to take the first step to forgive.

Place a piece of paper on the floor, put your foot on the page and trace around it to create a footprint. Inside your footprint outline write, "Take the first step to forgive." As you hold up your footprint, ask God to help you forgive so that you can protect your relationships.

Read Luke 17:3-4

DAY 2

Match the OPPOSITES to the right by drawing a line between the two answers.

When someone hurts you, what do you immediately want to do? Do the same thing to them that they've done to you, right?

God has a better way of course. He knows that instead of thinking about how to pay someone back, we should think about how we can win someone back. Because fixing our relationships or friendships is always more important than getting even. So when someone hurts you, instead of trying to get them back, do the opposite! Choose to heal instead of hurt, to forgive instead of getting even.

- | | |
|--------|---------|
| HOT | SHUT |
| LEFT | LOW |
| HURT | NO |
| HIGH | NIGHT |
| DAY | DOWN |
| YES | GOODBYE |
| FRIEND | RIGHT |
| HELLO | ENEMY |
| UP | COLD |
| OPEN | HEAL |

When you find yourself getting angry when you've been hurt, bow your head and ask God to help you do the exact opposite of what you feel like. Instead of paying back to get even, ask God to help you take the first step to forgive.



Read Mark 11:25

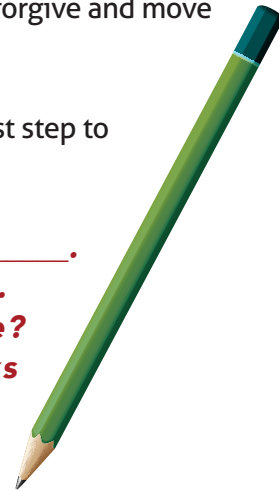
DAY 3

Do you sometimes treat God like a vending machine with your prayers? If you put in the time to ask for what you want (like putting a coin into a vending machine) then you'll get back what you've asked for (like a coke or package of chips). The point of prayer isn't to get God to do what we want. The point of prayer is to change us, to make us more like Jesus.

If we want to be more like Jesus, the number one thing we have to take a look at is how we're treating other people. This is especially true when it comes to how we forgive and move on. Is there anyone you're refusing to forgive? Why?

Fill in the blank in the prayer below, asking God to help you take the first step to forgive this week.

***"God, this week, I'm really frustrated with _____.
You already know what happened and why I'm upset.
Can you please help me take the first step to forgive?
I don't want to stay mad but I need your help. Thanks
for loving me God and for choosing to forgive every
time I mess up. In Jesus' name, amen."***



Read Hebrews 12:14

DAY 4

Take a look at the very first sentence in today's verse.

When it comes to forgiveness, to living in peace with others instead of staying mad, what is the key? Yes, simply to try! To try means to attempt, to make an effort, to give it a shot.

So this week, when someone hurts you with their words or actions, just TRY. Take the first step even when you don't feel like it. When you try, you'll be one step closer to living the way God wants you to live.

Write the word TRY on a wide rubber band with a ball point pen. As you wear your bracelet this week, remember to take the first step as you try to forgive.



**Take the
first step to
forgive others.**