

PRAYER JOURNAL

102



Choosing to Forgive
as we are Forgiven

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DAY 1 • WHAT IS

ANGER? 1

DAY 2 • WHAT IS

FORGIVENESS? 7

DAY 3 • HOW DO

I FORGIVE? 14

DAY 4 • CONTINUING TO

PRACTICE FORGIVENESS .. 21

DAY 5 • STARTING

THE JOURNEY OF

FORGIVENESS 26

APPENDICES 28

BIBLE VERSE

REFERENCE 36

DAY 1

What is Anger?

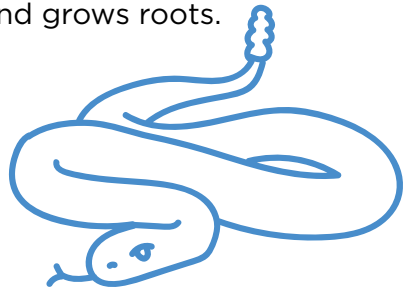
STORY

Have you ever seen a rattlesnake? Most people are scared of them, and for good reason. Rattlesnakes are venomous and a bite from one can be fatal. When rattlesnakes get angry, they shake their rattle to warn other animals to stay away. If the animal doesn't stay away, the rattlesnake will strike. Occasionally, if a rattlesnake becomes very angry and upset, they will stop thinking clearly and bite themselves by mistake. Some snakes have even died from biting themselves.

When we do not forgive others, we are like a snake that is so angry it bites itself. Our bitterness only hurts ourselves.

Anger Takes Root

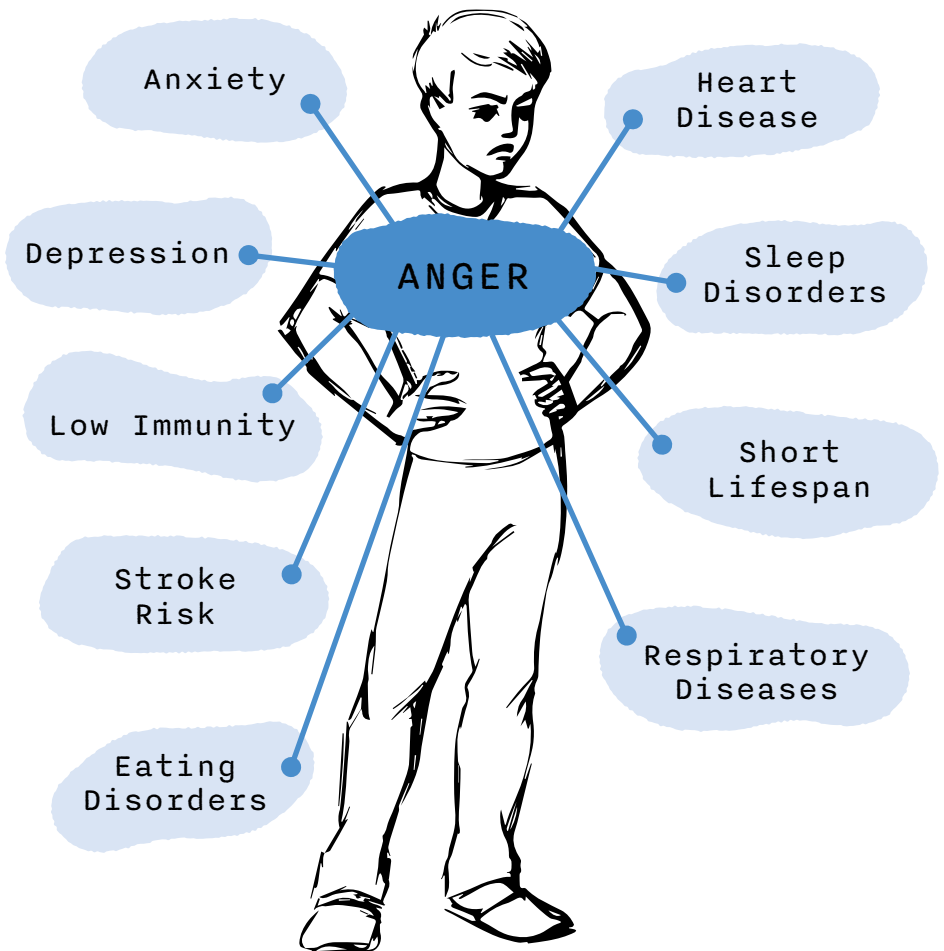
Anger can be like a seed that lands in dirt. If it is left, there it will start to grow and its roots will go deeper and deeper. The more it grows, the harder it is to get rid of. If we allow our anger to stay in our hearts it will grow and become harder and harder to let go. If we can learn to and choose to forgive and let go of our anger before it takes root, our lives will be filled with more peace. Just like it is easy to get rid of a seed before it sprouts and grows roots.



Sayings to Remember about Anger

There is an old saying that goes “You can’t stop a bird from flying over your head, but you can stop it from making a nest in your hair.” Anger is kind of like a bird. You might not be able to stop yourself from feeling angry when someone makes you upset. But you can stop yourself from holding onto that anger and allowing it to grow inside you.

There are lots of reasons we should try and let go of anger. Did you know that anger is actually bad for your health? Look at all the problems anger can cause!



FILL IN THE BLANK

Write down the words that you think go in each blank. Then compare your answers to the verses in the back of the book and see if you were correct.

“In your anger do not _____: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.”

Ephesians 4:21 NIV

“An angry person causes trouble. A person who gets angry easily _____ a lot.”

Proverbs 29:22 ICB

“You can recognize _____ by the way they give full vent to their _____ and let their words fly! But the wise bite their tongues and hold back all they could say.”

Proverbs 29:11 TPT



ACTIVITY



Read each quote and write down what you think it means:

“Bitterness is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die.” – Unknown

“Holding a grudge is like letting someone live rent-free in your head.” – Unknown

“There’s no such thing as a bitter person who keeps the bitterness to himself.” – Erwin W. Lutzer

“Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.” – Mark Twain



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does our anger hurt us?
2. Does the Bible say anger is a sin?
3. Is it ever good to be angry?

Optional Question for Teens

1. How has your anger hurt you in the past?

JOURNAL QUESTION



Is there anyone in your life that you are having a hard time forgiving? Why is it difficult for you to forgive them?



PRAYER

"Father, please help us not to be bitter toward people who have hurt us. Help us to choose to forgive people quickly. Help us to understand how anger hurts us."

APPENDIX A

Pg. 28

Anger affects each of us differently. Go check out Appendix A for an activity about anger.

DAY 2

What is Forgiveness?

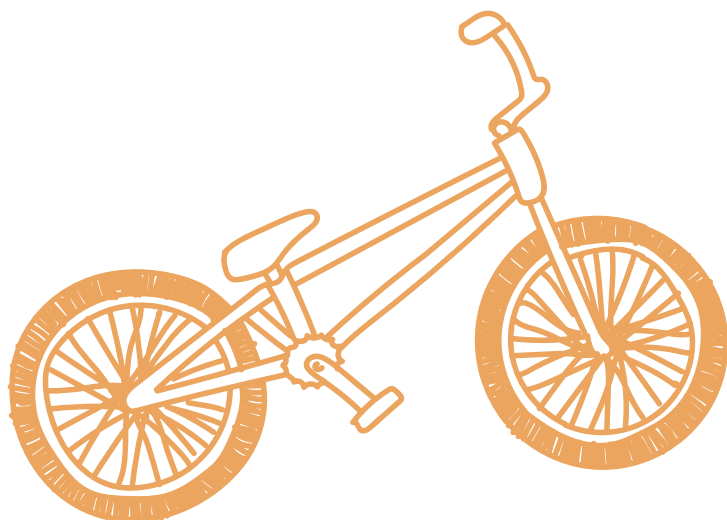
STORY

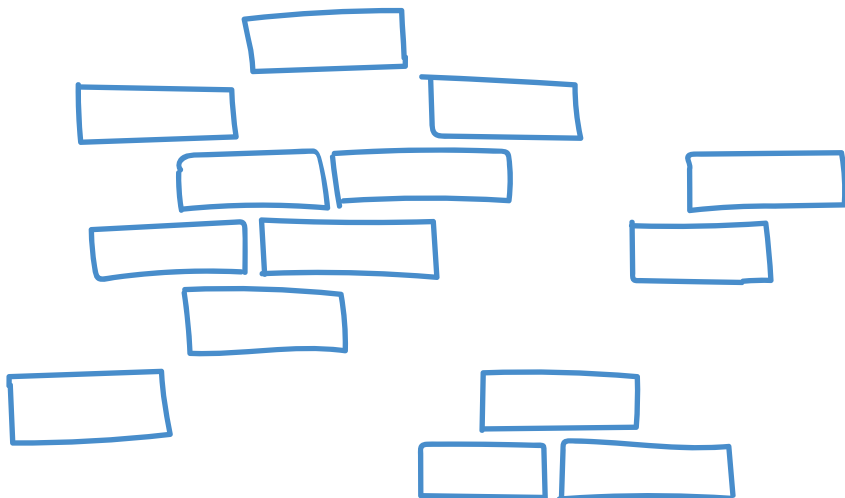
Ollie had wanted a bike for a very, very long time. One year, for his birthday, his mom bought him a brand new, bright red bicycle. He was so excited about his new bike that he rode it until it got too dark for him to see. The next day when he got home from school, he went to ride his bike again, but it wasn't there. He looked outside and saw his brother Axel riding his bike down the road! He yelled for Axel to stop but Axel just ignored him and kept on riding. Ollie tried to catch Axel and make him get off the bike but Axel was too fast. Ollie gave up and went inside.

Later that evening, Axel came home and went straight to his room without talking to Ollie. Ollie went out to look for his bike and found that the front wheel was bent and the bike was unrideable. He went to Axel's room and pounded on the door. He was so angry he almost punched a hole right through the door. Axel finally opened the door with an angry look. Axel told Ollie to stop banging on his door. When Ollie asked if Axel had broken his bike, Axel just slammed the door shut. Ollie was so angry he wanted to scream, but he also didn't like the way he felt when he was angry. He walked back to his room and sat on his bed. Axel hadn't been fair to Ollie, he hadn't even said he was sorry, but Ollie didn't want to hold on to his anger. So Ollie decided to forgive his brother for breaking his bike and let go of the anger. He felt better, but he had to remember that he had decided to forgive his brother, because sometimes the angry feelings would try to come back.

One week later, Ollie's mom came home with another bike wheel to replace the one Axel broke. Ollie was so excited and he rode the replacement bike everyday. When Axel asked if he could borrow the bike, Ollie told him "Not yet. I forgive you for breaking the bike wheel, but I just don't trust you to take care of my bike like I do." Ollie wasn't mad at Axel anymore but that didn't mean he trusted him to not break his bike again.

Forgiveness means choosing, with God's help, to let go of the feelings of anger or sadness you might have towards others who hurt you and choosing to move forward with a light and unburdened heart. Just like when you accidentally break your friend's favorite toy and they forgive you, it's about understanding that everyone makes mistakes and being willing to still care about each other despite those mistakes. It doesn't mean the person who did you wrong is worthy to be trusted. In time, maybe you can share how angry you were and that you would like to trust that person if they are truly sorry for their carelessness. Forgiveness is an action and it is a choice that God wants us to make. God knows that unforgiveness will end up hurting us more than the one we hold anger against.





FILL IN THE BLANK



Write down the words that you think go in each blank. Then compare your answers to the verses in the back of the book and see if you were correct.

“Lay aside bitter words, temper tantrums, revenge, profanity, and insults. But instead be _____ and affectionate toward one another.

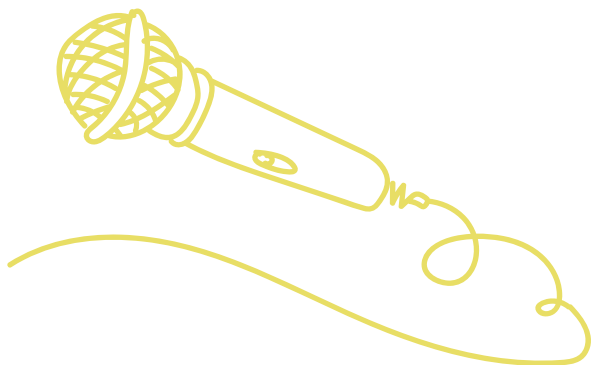
Has God graciously forgiven you? Then graciously _____ one another in the depths of Christ’s love.”

Ephesians 4:31-32 TPT

“A gentle answer will calm a person’s anger.

But an _____ word will cause more anger.”

Proverbs 15:1 ICB



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between forgiveness and just saying “Sorry”?
2. When we forgive someone, does that mean they will never try to hurt us again?
3. When we love someone, does that mean we give them whatever they ask for?

Optional Questions for Teens

1. Why is it so difficult to forgive sometimes?
2. Why does forgiveness make us feel better?
3. Can you forgive someone even if they don’t ask for forgiveness?

ACTIVITY



Circle whether each statement is true or false.
Then write down why.

True or False - Forgiveness is telling
someone you are sorry.

True or False - Forgiveness is doing
whatever the person you were angry at
asks you.

True or False - Forgiveness is letting
go of your angry feelings.

True or False - Forgiveness is trying
to treat others the way Jesus would.

True or False - Forgiveness means
forgetting why you were angry.

JOURNAL QUESTION

Is there anyone in your life who made you really angry or hurt your feelings? Have you ever tried to let go of that anger?





PRAYER

"Father God, help us to understand the gift of forgiveness. Help us to be more like Jesus and forgive people who hurt us."

APPENDIX B



Pg. 29

Sometimes it can be hard to forgive people if we haven't practiced it. Go check out Appendix B for an activity that will help you learn about forgiveness from other people who have already practiced it.

APPENDIX C



Pg. 30

In our story today we talked about a boy whose brother broke his bike, but sometimes people do things that are much worse to us than breaking our bike. Go through Appendix C with an adult to learn more about really hard to forgive things.

How Do I Forgive?

STORY



Tommy was angry.

Whenever he would feel angry at someone who made him mad or some situation in his life that seemed so unfair, he would pick up a rock and put it in his backpack. The rock would remind him of why he was angry and how he should never forgive the person or thing that hurt him. He carried his backpack everywhere he went and added lots of rocks to it. The more rocks he carried, the angrier he got.

But the rocks started getting heavy. Tommy noticed that he couldn't run as fast as he used to because he was carrying so many rocks. He had to stop and rest every time he walked up a flight of stairs because the backpack had gotten so heavy.

One day Tommy found a pile of rocks larger than he had ever seen. In the center of the pile was a cross. He stared at the cross for a moment, unsure what to think of it. Suddenly he was startled by the sound of footsteps behind him. Tommy turned around and saw an old man with a long grey beard and a cane walking toward him. The man didn't seem to notice Tommy was there. He slowly walked up to the pile of rocks and stopped. Tommy saw the old man's lips moving but couldn't hear what he was saying. When the man was finished speaking, he pulled a little pebble out of his pocket and tossed it on the pile.



As the man turned to leave, he noticed Tommy was watching him. He told Tommy that the cross was a very special place where people could leave the rocks they carried around and stop being angry all the time. He explained that he used to carry a backpack full of rocks just like Tommy. Then someone told him that Jesus wanted to take those burdens of anger from him so that he could have a lighter and more happy life. They shared what Jesus said "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." He wanted rest from carrying around all his anger and bitterness he carried for so long." He found the cross a very long time ago and left all of his rocks behind, leaving those burdens with Jesus in his mind and like Jesus asked him to. At first, when the old man was younger, he might forget to bring the rocks to the cross, but when he felt the weight and burden of the rocks, he would remember the cross and bring those rocks to Jesus at the cross. As he got older, he got into the habit of bringing rocks quicker and more often. Over time, he even learned to not be offended very easy and to forgive quickly before he could even pick up a rock of anger.

Tommy looked at all the rocks piled up around the cross. He thought of all the kids just like him who must have been carrying those rocks around, and how they could all decide to leave them at the cross, with Jesus. Slowly, Tommy slid the straps of his backpack off his shoulders and set it on the ground. He began to pull out the rocks and add them to the pile. With every rock he thought of the person who had made him angry enough to pick it up. As he set the rocks down, he asked Jesus to help him forgive the people who hurt him. It took a long time for Tommy to take all the rocks out of his backpack. When the backpack was empty, he stood up and felt the freedom of walking without the weight of all his anger pulling him down.

Tommy went home feeling happy and lighter than he had in a long time.



FILL IN THE BLANK

Write down the words that you think go in each blank. Then compare your answers to the verses in the back of the book and see if you were correct.

“A _____ person is patient. He will be honored if he _____ a wrong done against him.”

Proverbs 19:11 ICB

“Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads. I will give you _____.”

Matthew 11:28 ICB

“Ask God to _____ those who say bad things to you. _____ for those who are cruel to you.”

Luke 6:28 ICB

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does anger feel like to you?
2. Can Jesus help you with forgiving and letting go of the anger, like rocks, that weigh you down?
3. How can we take our “anger rocks” to Jesus to help us to live free from those burdens?
4. How often do you think we need to bring “anger rocks” to Jesus and leave them there?

Optional Question for Teens

1. Is there anything in your life that you are struggling to forgive? Why is it so difficult?



ACTIVITY

Circle the number that best represents how angry each event makes you.

1. When someone cuts in front of you in line.

Not angry at all - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 - Very Angry

2. When someone says they will come see you, but they don't show up.

Not angry at all - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 - Very Angry

3. When someone hurts a person you love.

Not angry at all - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 - Very Angry



4. When someone reminds you about something in your past that you don't like.

Not angry at all - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 - Very Angry

5. When someone makes a promise but then doesn't keep it.

Not angry at all - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 - Very Angry

For every event that you circled a 5 or higher, go back and write down something you can do to help you feel less angry.

JOURNAL QUESTION



How does it feel to forgive and then do nice things for someone, even after that person made you mad?



PRAYER

"Father God, help us to love people who hurt us and make us angry even when they don't apologize. Please give us wisdom to know how to stay calm when we feel angry. Please remind us by Your Holy Spirit to take our anger to the Cross of Jesus and leave those burdens there."



Pg. 32

APPENDIX D

It can be tough to remember how we can forgive. Check out Appendix D for an activity that will help you learn the 5 fingers of forgiveness.

DAY 4

Continuing to Practice Forgiveness

STORY



Corrie Ten Boom and her sister were arrested for helping people escape from the enemy during World War II. They were badly mistreated during their imprisonment, and suffered more than we can possibly imagine. Corrie's sister died in the prison because of the guards.

Years later, after the war had ended and Corrie Ten Boom was free, she returned to Germany to tell people about God's love and forgiveness.

One night after speaking she was approached by a man. She immediately recognized him. He had been one of the guards at the prison that had mistreated her and her sister so badly. The man walked up to Corrie and introduced himself. He did not recognize her. He explained that he had been a guard and how thankful he was that God had forgiven him. Then he asked Corrie to forgive him. Corrie was fumbling around in her purse to avoid looking him in the eye. All of the pain and suffering he had inflicted on her was coming back to her mind. She knew God wanted her to practice forgiveness but she didn't think she could. So she asked God for help. The man was holding out his hand waiting for a handshake. Corrie still didn't feel like she could forgive him and she said a quick prayer to God. "Father, I can't forgive this man without your help, but I can shake his hand." She robotically lifted her hand to meet his and the moment their hands met she felt a current, like a jolt of electricity, travel from her shoulders down through

her body until she was covered in a healing, warm feeling and she was filled with God's love. She told the man who had sinned against her, "I forgive you brother. With all my heart."

FILL IN THE BLANK

"No matter how many times in one day your brother sins against you and says, 'I'm sorry; I am changing; forgive me,' you need to _____ him each and every time."

Luke 17:4 TPT

"Do not be _____ with each other, but _____ each other. If someone does wrong to you, then forgive him. Forgive each other because _____ forgave _____."

Colossians 3:13 ICB

"So _____ your enemies. Do _____ to them, and lend to them without hoping to get anything back. If you do these things, you will have a great reward. You will be _____ of the Most High God. Yes, because God is _____ even to people who are ungrateful and full of sin."

Luke 6:35-36 ICB

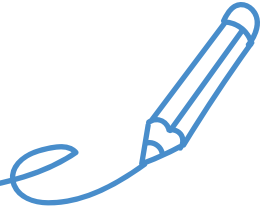


DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. How was Corrie Ten Boom able to forgive the man who had hurt her so badly?
2. Have you ever forgiven someone and then started feeling angry again? What did you do?

ACTIVITY



Look at this list of things on the left side of the page and circle things that you do when you are angry.

Draw a line connecting each action you circled on the left to a way for you to let go of your anger on the right.

Hold my breath

Count to ten

Scream at people

Talk to an adult

Run away

Write down what I'm angry about

Punch and kick

Do push ups

Ignore everyone

Ask God for help

Insult whoever made me angry

Take a few deep breaths

JOURNAL QUESTION

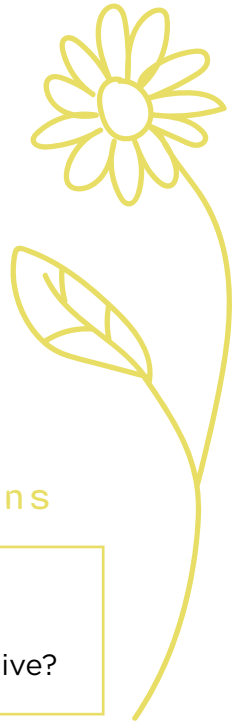
Write down all the reasons you can think of to forgive someone.

Optional Questions for Teens

How has God helped you forgive?

Or

What do you need God to help you forgive?





PRAYER

"Father thank you for helping us forgive. Please continue to help us to be guided by your Spirit and not our own anger."



APPENDIX E

Pg. 34

God wants to help us forgive – all we have to do is ask. Check out Appendix E to write a letter to God about your anger and ask him to help you with forgiveness.

DAY 5

Starting the Journey of Forgiveness

STORY



Exercise in Forgiveness – Bitterness is anger and unforgiveness carried for a long time.

Picture a person being angry at all the bad things that have happened to them in their life. Think about all these sources of anger as potatoes that this person grows whenever something bad happens to them. Imagine that on each potato they write down the bad thing that happened to them. As time goes on, they collect more and more potatoes. Imagine how heavy it would be to carry all those potatoes every day. If it were you, do you think it would be tiring trying to carry those potatoes everywhere you went? You want to let it go, but another part wants you to hold on to it. This goes on for days. Then the days turn into weeks. Then months and years. The anger potatoes now have roots coming from them and are starting to attach to your body. Those roots are no longer anger but are now growing into something even worse: “bitterness”. You are no longer a person who just carries anger. No, you have become a person who other people call “bitter”. You know in your heart that God does not want you to carry all those potatoes. He knows it is bad for you and He wants what’s best for you. You cry out to God that you don’t want to be a bitter person, to have the roots of bitterness. God tells you to find the nearest cross, like where Jesus died, to take away our sins. God tells you to come to Jesus when you are weary and heavy-laden and leave your burdens at the foot of the cross. By giving these burdens over to God, you are choosing to remove those

potatoes of anger from your life. You don't have to carry them anymore. And after they are left with Jesus, not only is the heavy weight of the potatoes gone, but the roots of bitterness growing from them start to shrivel up like a dead plant. You now want to tell those people who hurt you that you forgive them and God has taken away the anger and unforgiveness you have had to carry. You now walk in newness of life. You pray that God would help you to now quickly forgive others when we get angry so that we don't have to carry the weight of that anger again and never give the opportunity for roots of bitterness to grow. Thank you Father for being so loving to us, your children, by helping us to forgive as You have forgiven us!

Letting Go of Anger

Take some time to sit and really think about these questions before answering.

- 1 . Do you have any bitterness that you are still holding onto?
- 2 . Do you believe that God wants to take the burden of anger from you?
- 3 . What do you think it means to forgive someone?

APPENDIX F

Pg . 35

Sometimes it can be hard for us to let go of our anger because it feels like if we forgive the person who hurt us they will get away with the bad things that they did. Go to Appendix F to learn about how God tells us He is the one who will deliver justice.





APPENDIX A

How Does Anger Affect You?

There are times when we feel a little annoyed, and there are times we feel so angry we want to explode. For each level of anger below, write down or draw a picture of how you look and act at that level.

- 1 . I feel calm and content.
- 2 . I feel a little annoyed or frustrated.
- 3 . I am angry, I am still in control but not happy.
- 4 . I am starting to lose control and need to calm down.
- 5 . I am ready to explode, I am not safe.

APPENDIX B

Learning From Others

Ask 3 people to tell you about a time they had to forgive someone. Write down or draw a picture of their stories in the three spaces below.



APPENDIX C

Hard to Forgive Issues

Sometimes it can be really, really hard to forgive someone. Especially if they don't deserve to be forgiven. But holding onto our anger and bitterness only hurts us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 . Did anyone ever do something to you that seems impossible to forgive?
- 2 . Why is it so hard to forgive that person?
- 3 . What does it feel like to hold onto that anger?
- 4 . If someone did something really bad to your friend a long time ago, and they were angry about it, would you tell them they should hold onto their anger or let it go?

Sometimes even when we try to forgive someone, our anger can come back. This doesn't mean we failed, it just means we need to forgive again. Sometimes it takes a long time before the anger stops coming back.

When I forgive:

- I am not pretending it never happened, I acknowledge it did.
- I am not saying it doesn't matter, it does. I acknowledge the pain.
- I am not letting them off the hook or getting away with it.
- I am saying "Jesus, I give you _____ (this person) and _____ (this situation). I will let you be their Judge and determine how to best handle this situation, for them and for me. I know you love them just like you love me. Jesus protect me and take care of me."

Jesus is the perfect judge and He wants "justice" more than you do. He is the only one who can perfectly judge and give out the perfect consequence that has both justice and mercy.



APPENDIX D

5 Fingers of Forgiveness

Trace or draw your hand on this page.



Write one of these 5 steps to forgiveness inside each finger of the drawing.

1. Breathe

Take a moment to breathe (7 deep breaths) and calm down.

2. Listen

To what the other person has to say, Hopefully they will apologize. If they are not around, take a moment to think about what burdens they carry in their own life that reveal why they might have done what they did.

3. Pray

Ask God to help you forgive the person for what they did.

4. Let go

Try to let go of your anger and leave it at the foot of the Cross.

5. Show Love

Do what you can to show love to the person who made you angry. This does not mean you have to trust them with anything they ask for. But let them know you have decided not to carry the anger toward them as best you can, with God's help!



APPENDIX E

A Letter to God

Write a letter to God.

Write about what makes you angry. Write about why you are angry. Ask God to help you forgive.

Ultimately, we choose to forgive with God's help. It is a decision and an act of the will. Then we should "practice forgiveness", we should "exercise forgiveness" and, in time, our hearts will overflow with God's forgiveness and it will come more easily.

APPENDIX F

Revenge is the Lord's

Read these Bible verses and re-write them in your own words.

“Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the LORD.”

Romans 12:19 NLT

“Be sure that no one pays back wrong for wrong. But always try to do what is good for each other and for all people.”

1 Thessalonians 5:15 ICB

DISCUSSION QUESTION



How hard is it for you to trust that God will make sure justice is done?

BIBLE VERSE REFERENCE

Ephesians 4:21 NIV

In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

Proverbs 29:22 ICB

An angry person causes trouble. A person who gets angry easily sins a lot.

Proverbs 29:11 TPT

You can recognize fools by the way they give full vent to their rage and let their words fly! But the wise bite their tongues and hold back all they could say.

Ephesians 4:31-32 TPT

Lay aside bitter words, temper tantrums, revenge, profanity, and insults. But instead be kind and affectionate toward one another. Has God graciously forgiven you? Then graciously forgive one another in the depths of Christ's love.

Proverbs 15:1 ICB

A gentle answer will calm a person's anger. But an unkind word will cause more anger.

Proverbs 19:11 ICB

A wise person is patient. He will be honored if he ignores a wrong done against him.

Mathew 11:28 ICB

Come to me, all of you who are tired and have heavy loads. I will give you rest.

Luke 6:28 ICB

Ask God to bless those who say bad things to you. Pray for those who are cruel to you.

Luke 17:4 TPT

No matter how many times in one day your brother sins against you and says, 'I'm sorry; I am changing; forgive me,' you need to forgive him each and every time.

Colossians 3:13 ICB

Do not be angry with each other, but forgive each other. If someone does wrong to you, then forgive him. Forgive each other because the Lord forgave you.

Luke 6:35 ICB

So love your enemies. Do good to them and lend to them without hoping to get anything back. If you do these things, you will have a great reward. You will be sons of the Most High God. Yes, because God is kind even to people who are ungrateful and full of sin.

Bible Verses on Anger

James 1:19 ICB

My dear brothers, always be willing to listen and slow to speak. Do not become angry easily.

James 1:20 ICB

Anger will not help you live a good life as God wants.

Proverbs 19:11 ICB

A wise person is patient. He will be honored if he ignores a wrong done against him.

Ecclesiastes 7:9 ESV

Be not quick in your spirit to become angry, for anger lodges in the heart of fools.

Proverbs 29:11 ICB

A foolish person loses his temper. But a wise person controls his anger.

Colossians 3:8 ICB

But now put these things out of your life: anger, bad temper, doing or saying things to hurt others, and using evil words when you talk.

Psalm 37:8 ICB

Don't get angry. Don't be upset; it only leads to trouble.

Ephesians 4:26 NIV

In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

Proverbs 4:23 NIV

Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.

Romans 12:21 NIV

Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Ephesians 4:31-32 NIV

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ, God forgave you.

Proverbs 15:1 TPT

Respond gently when you are confronted and you'll defuse the rage of another. Responding with sharp, cutting words will only make it worse.





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