

Embers to Flames Prayer Training

PRAYERS OF FORGIVENESS AND BLESSING

What Jesus says will happen if we do not forgive.

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” (Mt 6:14-15)

Jesus told a parable about someone whose debt was forgiven, but who did not forgive someone who owed him. Jesus concluded the parable with these words: “The master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive from your heart.” (Mt 18:34-35)

What kind of forgiveness are we to do?

We are to forgive “**just as in Christ God forgave you.**” (Ephesians 4:32)

God forgives because Christ himself “bore our sins in his body on the cross....” (1 Peter 2:24)
We forgive others because Christ bore their sins on the cross. “He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2)

God does not wait for us to apologize. “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)

God follows up his forgiveness with “one blessing after another.” He forgives from a heart full of grace and truth. (John 1:16, 17)

Forgiveness is a process that is not complete until we can bless the person we are forgiving with joy! (Charles Kraft)

Why do we forgive even enemies?

He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:2)

Jesus says in Luke 6:27-28: “Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you. Pray *for* those who mistreat you.”

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. ...Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. (Romans 12:17, 19) But Romans 12 continues: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him....Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” (Romans 12:20-21)

How do we get the power to do God’s type of forgiveness?

“And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.’” (John 20:22-23) Sins that we do not forgive in the power of the Holy Spirit keep overpowering both us and those we do not forgive.

What is the relationship between unforgiveness and the devil?

“In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.” Ephesians 4:26-27

A model prayer for forgiveness in the Old Testament

David’s prayer in Psalm 51 gives guidelines for a prayer for forgiveness, either for ourselves, or for others. “Cleanse me (them) from my (their) sin. Teach me (them) wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me (them) and I (they) will be whiter than snow. Let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Create in me (them) a pure heart. Then take not your Holy Spirit from me (them). Restore (give) to me (them) the joy of your salvation. Then I (they) will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will turn back to you.” (In Jesus name, amen!)

Model prayers for forgiving others in the New Testament

Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34)

Stephen prayed for those who were killing him: “Lord, do not hold this sin against them.” (Acts 7:60) So against whom was this sin to be held, or charged? Against Jesus. And what was the result of that prayer? Saul kept on persecuting Christians for a while, but due to the work of the Holy Spirit in his life, it became more and more painful for him to do so. As Jesus said to Saul on the way to Damascus, “It is hard for you to kick against the goads.” (Acts 26:14) When we forgive people, we can ask the Holy Spirit to do whatever it takes to bring them to the point of repentance so that they can receive and fully benefit from the forgiveness.

Paul prayed for other believers who had deserted him: “May it not be held against them.” (2 Tim 4:16) When we forgive other Christians, we remember that Jesus died for those their sins too. The following prayer is typical of what Paul prayed for other Christians, even those who may have offended him.

I pray that out of his glorious riches the Father may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Eph 3:16-21)

Paul also urged us to pray “for all people....This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one

mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people.” (1 Timothy 2:1-6)

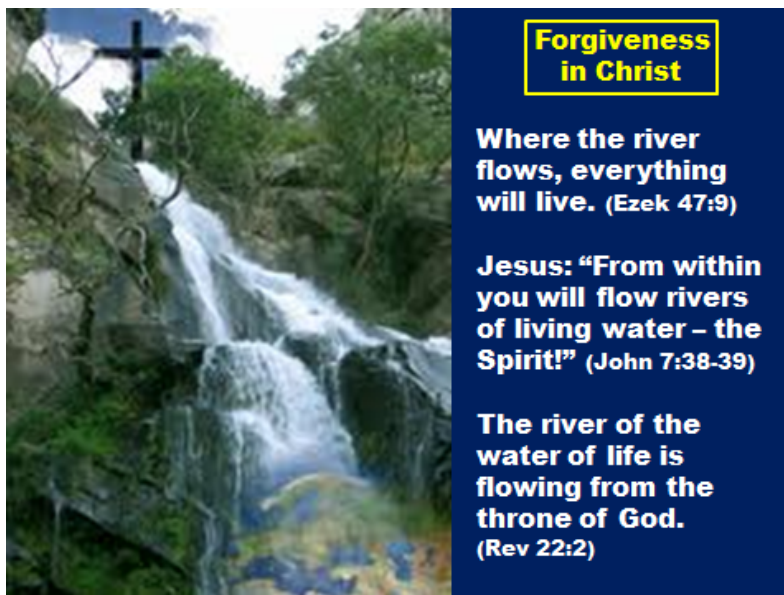
Contemporary prayers for forgiveness

1) Jessica forgave the stepfather who had killed her own mother. She explains, “I knew with the media being there and how packed the courtroom was that it was a good opportunity to show God’s grace in the situation.” Her words to her stepfather in the court room flow grace:

“Regardless of what you’ve done, I still love you for the person that you were to my brother and I. God has kept anger out of my heart this whole time and given me an unearthly peace and wrapped me in his love. It is because of him that I forgive you. I don’t know how you got to the point of killing my mama, but please know that there’s hope and that I pray for you every day that you’ll find the Lord again and have a relationship with him stronger than you ever did before.”

2) After a drunk driver killed her daughter in a car accident, Renee made many public speeches on the danger of drunk driving. But she kept going into deeper and deeper darkness until she forgave Eric, the young man who had killed her daughter. Later Renee and Eric spoke in the same meetings, warning against drunk driving, but also sharing the blessings of forgiveness.

3) Ali and fellow church leaders forgave the terrorists who had killed 23 of them in one attack. Six years later Ali led the leader of the terrorists to Christ. That forgiven and changed leader is now leading other terrorists out of a culture of death into the Living Way of Jesus. These forgiven terrorists now have the Spirit of Christ in them, “the hope of glory.” (Col 1:27) They are no longer burning churches and killing Christians. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Gal 5:22)



On this website, <http://onefaithmanyfaces.org/embers-flames-prayer-training/>, you will find the following:

1. This handout on “Prayers of Forgiveness and Blessing.”
2. The two worksheets on prayers of forgiveness and blessing.
3. Six teachings by Ruth Veltkamp called “True Forgiveness – As God Intends.”

Also you can find the following on the internet:

1. Michael West’s song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h1Lu5udXEZI>
2. Renee and Eric’s story: <http://matthewwest.com/the-stories/the-story-forgiveness/>, parts 1 and 2
3. Jesica’s story: <http://sovereignhopechurch.com/endless-grace-a-story-of-forgiveness>