

FORGIVENESS: WE HAVE A CHOICE

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Without forgiveness, there is resentment — or guilt. Instead of human fellowship, there are separate prisons.

We have a choice: We can stay where we are — or we can give or ask for forgiveness.

- **FORGIVENESS IS A DECISION.** It is not a feeling. A decision to forgive is a first step.
- **FORGIVENESS IS SHOWING MERCY** even when the injury has been deliberate. The challenge is not in forgiving when there is an excuse for what was done, but in forgiving when there is none.
- **FORGIVENESS IS ACCEPTING THE PERSON AS IS.** It is letting go of judgments. People can begin to deepen relationships if they forgive each other — continually — for not being equal to their expectations.
- **FORGIVENESS IS TAKING A RISK.** It is making myself vulnerable. To renew my commitment to someone who betrayed my trust is to trust myself to handle being hurt again.
- **FORGIVENESS IS A WAY OF LIVING.** It is developing a readiness to forgive: by pardoning others for the little daily hurts and annoyances, by pardoning ourselves for small things, too.
- **FORGIVENESS IS CHOOSING TO LOVE.** Forgiveness is the first skill of self-giving love. It takes the hurts, acknowledges the problem, accepts the person and loves in the direction of resolving the situation.
- **FORGIVENESS IS NOT SENTIMENTAL,** not condescending, not righteous. Above all, it is not conditional.