

A Prayer for Forgiveness

And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off, and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Matthew 5:30

Today I forgive everyone and I start by forgiving myself.
I forgive myself for not always being my best.
I forgive myself for staying in relationships that do not work.
I forgive myself for being afraid to do the things that I know I must do.
I forgive myself for being undisciplined and disobedient.
I forgive myself for not letting go and letting God.
I forgive myself for ignoring obvious signs.
I forgive myself for being tired when I want to be energetic.
I forgive myself for being sloppy or disorganized when I don't have time.
I forgive myself for not trying hard enough.
I forgive myself for not having the conviction to be honest.
I forgive myself for each time that I did not celebrate someone else.
I forgive myself for not loving, respecting, and cherishing myself.
I forgive myself for past mistakes.
As I forgive myself,
God forgives me.
The past is not a mirror of the future.
The future is made of the power of God's grace and God's victory.
I move forward with love,
the wisdom that is at the core of all forgiveness.

I forgive myself
and I am instantly healed.

I forgive myself
and my burdens drop with ease.

I forgive myself
and my vision is deeper and clearer
for now I see the light of the Holy Spirit empowering me with Truth.

The act of cutting off our own hands is a powerful image; the sacrifice of the flesh may appear gruesome, but it symbolizes overcoming physical attachment to attain spiritual consciousness. The Bible does not really mean for us to cut off our hands. The message of this passage is that we must make absolutely sure that nothing in our lives is out of sync with Spirit, which expresses through us as love for all living creatures and certainly for all people. We are being asked to cut off and cast away from us, to move through, pass over, or release whatever or whoever is not in our best interest. We may have attempted to release the situation or person many times before without success. But the process of releasing a thing or person and moving on is a journey in and of itself. Sometimes we need to center ourselves in Spirit to more clearly understand what or whom we need to release. Sometimes the person has departed or the situation has ended and we do not even realize that we are still holding on. No matter what form the attachment takes, we become conscious of it when Spirit calls us to move outside of our comfort zone and let go of whatever is keeping us from moving forward in our lives.

Forgiveness is important for prayer to work. In Matthew 5:22–24, Jesus said, “But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment ... Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.” The gift that we bring to the altar is prayer. We must first reconcile with those who we need to forgive before offering our prayers. This does not mean that you have to have someone ask for forgiveness or even that you must provide a verbal forgiveness. It means that in your heart, you must forgive them. Prayer without forgiveness does not work.

When we pray, we are not asking God for anything; we are realizing our oneness with God, with Spirit. We cannot realize our oneness with Spirit when our thoughts are being tainted by harmful, negative, unforgiving thoughts. It is difficult to become

centered in the consciousness of God if we are angry, resentful, uptight, afraid, spiteful, or envious.

Whatever the challenge, we need to let go of the past to open the flow of our ultimate greatness. By releasing what is not in our best interests, we free ourselves to move forward: physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

The most important lesson I learned in the past decade is that forgiveness is not for the person I need to forgive; forgiveness is for me. When we hold resentment against anyone, we bind ourselves to that person; we give that person power over us, so much that the blockage interferes with our spiritual awareness. In Romans 12:2, Paul said, “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The more we change our level of thinking from being limited to what we believe we can do in the physical world, the sooner our prayers can be answered. There is no question that God can answer our prayers by God’s grace, despite our failures or refusals to center ourselves in Christ consciousness. But when we realize that Spirit is always allowing us to manifest our desires through the right state of consciousness, we relieve our suffering and begin to manifest our goals with greater ease.

In Jeremiah 29:11–14, the prophet tells us that God said, “For I know the plans I have for you ... plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all of your heart.” True prayer, then, is the act of seeking God with all of our heart, which is seeking Spirit without the baggage of hurt or resentment that we all love to lug around. True prayer is the process of centering in divine love by releasing and letting go. John said “God is love.” (1 John 4:16) True prayer or communion with God is the realization of the love that expresses as us; we are made in the image and likeness of God. When we truly pray, we embrace that image and likeness.

Prayer is not about trying to reach God or inform God about our troubles. Prayer is the act of centering in the consciousness that God is the infinite source of all within and without. We do not pray to God; we pray from the consciousness of God. God is already praying through us. We are already one with God. All we need to do is acknowledge our oneness. When we acknowledge our oneness, we open our minds and hearts to receive God's blessings. Prayer is the opening through which we enter into this acknowledgement of our oneness; it is the portal through which we embrace our relationship with the Divine. We are like prodigal sons coming home to the Father who has always been there for us.

When we believe that God is blessing us, we realize our oneness with God.

When we realize our oneness with God, our desires manifest.

We do not get what we ask for, but what we believe we will receive.

When we believe we will get what we ask for, we will receive it.

In Isaiah 65:24, the prophet teaches us that God said, "Before they call, I will answer." In Luke 12:32, Jesus says that it is God's good pleasure to give us the Kingdom. In Matthew 6:33, Jesus said, "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." God can do no more for you than God can do through you.

God is always in our midst. Our prayers are always answered when we are in alignment with his omnipotence. Therefore, forgiveness is one of the greatest blessings we can give ourselves. Forgiveness releases the energy that is blocked by our resentment. Forgiveness is part of our walk of faith. The more we practice it, the easier it gets.

Jesus teaches us forgiveness through the parable of the unmerciful servant. Peter had come to Jesus and asked how many times he must forgive God's brother when he sinned, suggesting seven. Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." (Matt. 18:22) Then Jesus tells us the story of the

servant who was forgiven by the king, but when the servant's own debtor asked the servant for forgiveness, the servant refused to forgive him and had his debtor thrown into prison. When the king who had forgiven the servant found out, he was outraged and turned his servant over to the jailers. Jesus said, "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." (Matt. 18: 23–35)

What Jesus is teaching here is not about a vindictive God who will punish us; He is teaching us about our own consciousness. When we do not open up our hearts to forgive, in a sense we are throwing ourselves into prisons of our own making.

To have the clarity to let go, we must open our eyes and see people, places, relationships, circumstances, and situations without denial or resistance. When we open our hearts with forgiveness rather than condemnation, we can accept that our spouses will not change simply because we want them to, that they are on their own path, learning their own lessons, which have nothing to do with us. We can accept that our parents did the best they could and are doing the best that they can and their criticisms of us have nothing to do with us, but are reflections of their own struggles. We can accept the past, realize that past mistakes cannot be changed, and move forward. We have to accept that people are in our lives only for a season, and when that season ends, we have to let them go. We cannot control the manner in which people make decisions, and we must respect them for who they are, regardless of our differences. We also have to recognize that sometimes people will not accept us for who we are; however, that is not a sign that we need to change. Instead, it is a signal for us to go on about our Father's business. We cannot change other people; they have to do that for themselves. But we can change how we allow other people to impact our lives and how we use our thoughts, gifts, and energies when we relate to them.

When we are committed to liberating ourselves from the situations and people that drain our resources, Spirit reveals to us what we need to know, and this knowledge provides us with

the wisdom to let go of the past and move forward. One of the ways Spirit guides us is through prayer. If you want an answer to a difficult problem, pray over it.

Prayer takes many forms, many of which are discussed throughout this book. In essence, prayer involves opening our consciousness to accept the good that Spirit is waiting to give us and the guidance that is always there. Prayer is centering ourselves in the acknowledgement that we are one with Spirit. We accomplish centering by being silent and still, but we cannot be still in consciousness or silent or peaceful in mind and heart when we are holding on to the past. Sometimes prayer will reveal to us that we have to release someone or something because that is the answer that we are seeking. When we are able to go within this secret place of silence, we realize that there is no need to worry; the answers we need are revealed to us. What we need to know may be revealed by Spirit immediately, or in a remark someone makes, or in the way someone treats us, or by someone else taking initiative, or immediately upon our awakening from a deep sleep. Regardless of how the answers to our prayers show up, we need to bless them and heed their messages.

When we hear the call of Spirit, it is easier to let go. We realize that we do not need to cling to anyone or anything. Spirit's good seeks us and flows to us with ease. We do not need to judge those around us or struggle to keep those bad influences in our lives with us. We begin to understand that friends, family, and acquaintances are doing whatever they need to do in their lives at their appointed time, in their appointed place. Our loved ones also live their lives in perfect, divine order. When we are able to pray and let them go to live their lives in peace with the assurance that God is blessing them, then we are able to move forward to do what is best for us.