

FORGIVENESS JOURNALING

As you begin Forgiveness Journaling, remind yourself that you have decided to let go of your hurt, anger, bitterness, and resentment. You no longer wish to “drink the poison of unforgiveness, hoping that the other person will die.”

- You will be placing all of your hurt, anger, unforgiveness, and hardness of heart before the Lord.
- You will ask Him to show you the one who hurt you through His eyes.
- You will ask your heavenly Father to remove the hurt, anger, unforgiveness, and hardness from your heart, and to restore in you a heart that is pure and strong and able to love again.
- Lastly, you will ask God to show you the path toward “reconciliation,” whatever that may mean in your particular circumstance. When the other is also willing to do the necessary work, a meaningful relationship can be restored. If the other person is unwilling to participate, you will still be able to wish him/her well and to continue to pray for him/her.

LET’S BEGIN!!

- Find a quiet place, where you can write; a place where you can be undisturbed and prayerful. Begin by describing the hurtful experience. Write down the details of the experience, leaving nothing out.
- Express the negative impact this experience has had on you, on your life, or on the lives of those you love. For example:
 - Increased vulnerability, insecurity, fearfulness?
 - Distrust of self, of others, of the world?
 - Feelings of helplessness, powerlessness?
 - Negative feelings about yourself, including how you view yourself, as well as how you perceive that others view you?
 - Hesitance to allow yourself to be close to others, in the future?
- Write down all the feelings you experienced when the hurt happened, and that you experience now (see **FEELINGS DOWNLOAD**).
- Put into words the thoughts and beliefs that you have regarding this hurtful experience.
- Write down what you do now, as a direct result of the painful experience, and as a result of your feelings and thoughts about that experience. For example:
 - I lash out in anger
 - I put up walls to protect myself
 - I rehash the events in my mind
 - I dwell on things I that I believe I could have or should have said or done
 - I imagine negative things/misfortunes that could happen to this hurtful person

PRAYER:

- Close your eyes, take a few deep breaths, and imagine yourself in a place where you are able to be with the Lord. Allow yourself to see our Lord and yourself, as well as the setting, clearly, in your mind's eye, including all of the shapes, colors, sounds, and smells.
- Place before the Lord everything that you have written in your journal, including the hurtful experience, the impact upon you, your thoughts and feelings, and the ultimate results for you and for your relationships. Picture each of these as concrete objects, with size and shape and color and texture. When you place your hurt before the Lord, you might picture it as a bruised and bleeding heart, or a heart of stone. When you place your anger before the Lord, you might picture it as a ball of fire.

- Ask the Lord to shine His light on additional details, feelings, thoughts, and results, that you may not have considered or did not recall. Place those things before Him, as well.
- Ask the Lord to reveal to you any false beliefs, related to the hurtful experience: in the way that you have thought of the experience or thought of yourself within the experience, in the way that you have been portrayed by others, or in the way that you have thought of or portrayed others. Ask Him to reveal His truth about all of the above.
- Be prepared to sit quietly for 5 – 15 minutes, opening your heart, your mind, and your soul to the holy Spirit.
- Write down the feelings, thoughts, and/or images that come to you. Be especially aware of any new thoughts, beliefs, insights related to the whole experience. We can better discern that God is speaking to us when what we “hear” is consistent with his Word.

TOMORROW, the NEXT DAY, and the DAY AFTER THAT...

- Repeat **ALL** of the steps of **PRAYER**, detailed above, including any new thoughts, beliefs, or insights that you recorded from your previous prayer experience.
- Record what comes to your mind and heart, keeping aware of any new thoughts, beliefs or insights. Compare what you “hear” with God’s Word.

WHEN YOU HAVE BEGUN TO LET GO OF YOUR HURT, ANGER, BITTERNESS AND RESENTMENT...

- Go to that place where you are able to be with the Lord. Once again, see our Lord and yourself, as well as that place, clearly, in your mind's eye, including all of the shapes, colors, sounds, and smells.
- Ask the Lord to remind you of the positive events in and about your relationship, prior to the hurt.
- Ask the Lord to show you how He has and how He will continue to turn all of this to the good in your life.
- Ask the Lord to heal your broken heart and your troubled mind, and to give you a new heart (free of hardness and pain, and free to love), and a new mind (free of thinking about the past, and full of gratitude for the present and the future)
- Write down the feelings, thoughts, and/or images that come to you. Be especially aware of any new thoughts, beliefs, insights related to the whole experience.

WHEN YOU ARE ABLE TO WISH GOOD THINGS IN THE LIFE OF THE ONE WHO HARMED YOU...

- Go to that place where you are able to be with the Lord. Once again, see our Lord and yourself, as well as that place, clearly, in your mind's eye, including all of the shapes, colors, sounds, and smells.
- As God has helped you to see the person who harmed you through His eyes, your thoughts and feelings are no longer a barrier to reconciliation-- you are free to love and to connect.
- Ask the Lord to show you the very specific path toward reconciliation. If the person who has harmed you is unable or unwilling to do his/her own work toward repairing the relationship, God may call you to wish him/her well and to include him/her in your prayers. God may also call you to a new type of relationship with that person, a relationship that does not place you in the path of repeated harmful behaviors. Or God may call you to take action to reconnect. He may speak to you through other people, or through your daily devotional. He may open doors, by placing opportunities in your path.
- Write down anything that comes to you. Continue to be aware of any new thoughts, beliefs, insights related to the whole experience.