

## WTW Seven Percept Recourses

Forgiveness is not easy or painless in our natural person. In fact, in many cases choosing to forgive with a sincere heart is impossible apart from power of the Spirit. Knowing we should forgive offenses, injustices, attitudes and actions from wounds, resentments, bitterness, and revenge, especially those that come from family and friends, can pose the biggest challenges.

We understand the command to pursue peace with ALL people, and the varied ways to bring that into reality brings pain to the brain and weariness to the body.

Refusal or the inability to forgive is usually because the heart has not been prepared. Philippians 4 has 7 PRECEPTS in preparing the heart to deal with difficult relationships and circumstances. These exhortations need to be known, understood, and in practice; to be able to immediately forgive when the challenge arises.

### PERCEPT #1 Verse one "Stand Fast in the Lord"

When Paul wrote this letter, he was a prisoner and meeting with different kinds of opposition. Within the Christian circle he was opposed by jealous men who were preaching Christ out of envy, strife, and contention seeking to stir up tribulations for him.

Under these trying times he was not terrified nor depressed. He had learned to STAND FAST IN THE LORD. He had adversaries without and within and knew his strength had to come directly from the Lord. He knew the Lord's mind and the importance to stand against the enemy as he saw the wiles of the devil in wanting to break up and divide the people of God. This enabled him to forgive as his focus was on God's priorities, rather than his own restrictions and personal pain. So, forgiveness was available for him to choose.

### PERCEPT #2 Verse two "Be of the same Mind in the Lord"

Nothing is more distressing to the heart and enfeebling to our testimony, than the difference of opinion and prejudice that exist among the Body of Christ. Earlier in this letter he had told the church at Philippi:

. Phil:2:3 “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself:” This is a main edict and so easy to neglect:

. selfish ambition - Believing your point of view is necessary or more important to get across. And you must convince the other person of that. Needing attention to validate your own importance.

. Conceit - Pride in proclaiming and allowing strife to develop with the best of intentions of helping the other person see it your way. Having authority and using it as a control tool. Even the disciples had to battle this according to Luke 22:24.

. Vainglory is used in some texts. This has been stated to be empty wisdom of no value. The person full of vainglory will be an envious person – jealous of anyone that is more spiritual or more gifted than themselves. Jealousy expresses itself in malice and ends in strife. (James 3:14-16 “But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the Truth. This wisdom does not descend from above but is earthly sensual demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.”

When we remember that love covers a multitude of sins, we can choose to serve in love according to the lowly mind of Christ and have the same mind. Our hearts will be ready to confess, and forgiveness comes easy. (Proverbs 17:9 and 10:12)

PERCEPT #3 Verse 4 “Rejoice in the Lord always”

Our conscience will let us know when a bad attitude is hanging around. Rejoicing is difficult to do. How do I rejoice when all is going wrong?

. CHOOSE to FOCUS on what is lasting and Christ who gives us fresh mercies every morning.

. Recognize that the person giving you grief is made in God’s image and putting them down is an affront to His Creation. The person’s worth is in who they are in Christ and if NOT IN CHRIST, it is imperative that we provide a proper representation of our Father. Do we want to “Keep” the family name? We don’t rejoice in ourselves, service or work, and sometimes seeing daylight in circumstances can be tough, but the Hope of the promise can cause our WILL to declare I will rejoice. It is so much easier to forgive when you are rejoicing.

PERCEPT #4 Verse 5 “Let your gentleness be known of all men. The Lord is near.”

Now if we want this percept to be seen in us, we must be willing to apply, the first three. Too often our self-assertiveness, strong opinions and maybe harsh or extreme words prevent being gentle. Words are the main source of abuse but “LOOKS CAN ALSO KILL” Have you ever just rolled your eyes, shrugged your shoulders or given that popular expression “WELL WHAT EVER”?

.2 Timothy 2:24 “A servant of the Lord must not strive but be gentle to all men.” It is more important to express the character of Christ than our own opinions, and even if you are RIGHT to defend yourself. Gentleness with love is irresistible. The last part of this verse reminds us.....The Lord is near.

The disciples were guilty of hardness of heart when they rebuked the mother who brought their little ones to Jesus, and they showed their resentment against villagers that refused to receive the Lord and the disciples wanted fire to come down from heaven.

PERCEPT #5 Verse 6 “Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God”.

This verse addresses the circumstances of life. There is a lot of sorrow and sickness, many trials, and burdens to carry. They can come in waves and have many different varieties. When we try to cast them off, they just come back to haunt us and with plenty of WORRY. We may not be able to get rid of the trial, but we can release the BURDEN of the trial so that it no longer weighs the spirit down with anxiety. PRAYER IS A PRIORITY and without it true forgiveness is impossible. When battling, prayer allows us to correct all that is wrong in our hearts by agreeing with God that our hearts need a correction check. When corrected, the conscience is cleared, burdens are lifted and the heaviness we feel in our emotions are lightened. Emotions can linger while adjusting, and not listening to them as being final, and standing steadfast as we talked about earlier, is required.

PERCEPT #6 Verse 8 “THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Truth, according to God, not necessarily according to facts, but what is noble, just, pure lovely, good report. Thinking this way, will redirect the brain to change

chemicals, electrical impulses improving health and most important the heart, in moving toward TRUE forgiveness.

Our flesh is always ready to listen to slander, bad reports, and things that are vicious and blameworthy. We are not left hopeless; we do have a choice from the will.

PERCEPT #7 Verse 9 “Those things, which you have both learned, and received, and heard and seen in me, DO, and the God of peace shall be with you.”

We are told to pursue peace as it is within you, and now we have the pathway to peace that already lives within you; but we so many times ignore this gift because flesh (our old nature must yield and “die”). This death is possible because Jesus has already paid the price on the Cross for Peace and True Forgiveness is ours. It is our privilege to pass it on..

To recap:

Stand fast in the Lord

Have the same Mind in the Lord

Rejoice in the Lord

Who are known of all men for their gentleness

Who are anxious for nothing

Who have their minds set on things above

Who practice and DO the things they have learned

With our hearts and minds prepared, we are ready to walk through the process of True FORGIVENESS.