LWCC Marriage Ministries Email for July - 2026

FORGIVENESS IN MARRIAGE: Part 2 - The How!

Greetings again at the end of another month. Last month we looked at Why Forgiveness in Marriage is SO important. As mentioned, this month we want to look at the How of Forgiveness.

It has to be said that Forgiveness is an essential element to any Marriage. Unforgiveness acts like a poison in an individual's heart. It therefore also acts like a poison in a marriage, even if the unforgiven offence isn't related to the marriage relationship, but to something that happened between you and someone else. Harbouring resentment or bitterness toward others in your life in general simply has a negative effect on your marriage.

Just as unforgiveness is like a poison, so to forgiveness is the antidote. When we choose to forgive others—especially a husband or wife—we clear away toxic thoughts and emotions, which in turn cleans out the house. It blesses a relationship, and it helps us move forward. As we mentioned last month, "In marriage there's three amazing words - Grace, Trust and Love. Grace and Trust should flow as freely as Love, and it's in forgiveness that the three have their moment to shine together."

Forgiving other people is a serious issue with God, and one of the requirements of a marriage that wants to do things God's way. In so doing, there are five important steps to forgiveness. Practising these steps consistently can turn forgiveness into a lasting habit that strengthens your relationship every day.

1. Decide:

Forgiveness is a decision. Decide to respond with empathy, compassion, and/or understanding, whether they have come seeking your forgiveness, or not. In situations involving harm or abuse, healthy boundaries are certainly necessary, but your spirit can still lean toward release rather than resentment.

2. Release:

So therefore, regardless of whether they have come seeking forgiveness, or are totally unaware they have caused offence, Releasing the guilty person from your judgement is the next important step. At this point there are two things you need to do. First of all, Stop replaying the offence in your mind, and second, Stop dwelling on your hurt, because it keeps you stuck in a loop of pain. Allow yourself to release the burden for your own peace. Let the situation go, so it doesn't continue to weigh you down. It's not easy, and you may need help in working it through, but release is so important.

3. Reframe:

Find a way to mentally shift your view of the person or situation. This could mean wishing them peace, hoping for their growth, or taking the time to pray for them. Reframing and Prayer helps soften bitterness and brings clarity, even when there's no apology. Whether through prayer, or simply pausing to extend compassion, this shift in mindset can be one of the most powerful steps in healing past hurts. It takes

time, but approaching someone with peace in your heart, can transform your healing journey.

It will take time to make that mental shift complete, but by consistently working at it, there will come a day when you do not feel uncomfortable at hearing their name or being in their presence. If it's a serious level of forgiveness with your spouse, Reframing and Prayer will go a long way in the journey to healing.

4. Moving On:

Make a conscious choice not to bring up the past again and again. While it’s natural to remember, you don’t have to relive it. The past doesn’t have to define the present. Let the moment go, so your relationship can move forward.

5. Repeat:

Be prepared to Repeat the process. Forgiveness is not a one-time event. Keep going through these steps until you sense a genuine release of the unforgiveness in your heart. Be patient with yourself as you work through the process. If necessary, seek some help or ministry. Don't battle it on your own. If the issue is a serious breach of Trust within your Marriage relationship, or if it relates to an issue where you are having to forgive your spouse because the same issue has caused problems Again and Again, then consider seeking help or ministry together.

Some Further Practical Thoughts on Forgiving Your Spouse:

- **Communicate openly** about your hurt. Forgiveness doesn't mean sweeping things under the rug. Express your feelings calmly and constructively.
- **Choose to forgive,** even when you don't feel like it. It's not always easy, but forgiveness is often more about your choice than your feelings.
- **Remember your spouse's humanity.** Just like you, they are imperfect and will make mistakes. Approach them with empathy. As mentioned above, if it's an issue that happens again and again, communicate clearly your concern and suggest seeking help or coaching, in facing the issue and putting it to bed.
- **Pray for the strength to forgive.** If you're struggling, ask God to soften your heart and guide you in offering grace. Consider asking someone you can trust to stand with you and support you through the process.

Keep in mind, when forgiveness becomes a habit, relationships get stronger. Letting go doesn't mean forgetting, it means choosing freedom, peace, and connection over pain and distance. Your relationship deserves that kind of love. No, it's not easy. Trust has been impacted, emotions are on edge, and in the moment it's hard to think straight. *But CHOOSING Forgiveness is a wonderful Gift with incredible Power to transform relationships. When you CHOOSE to forgive, you're choosing love, connection, and growth.* And that is the Foundation of a strong, healthy marriage.

If these two emails have exposed some challenging stuff for you, please reach out to the Team for some support and maybe some coaching. We are there for you.

Blessings from your Marriage Ministries Team, Stan & Ronnie, John & Karen.

(Adapted From an Article from XO Marriage.)