

Forgiving When You're Wounded

When you've been bitten by someone's selfish words or actions, you can respond as one loved by God. This will neutralize the venom of Satan's accusations in your heart.

1. Realize that you've been bitten by someone with an attitude of *you're-wrong-and-I'm-right*. In a loving way, **go out** of the presence of this person.
2. Remember that your identity, if you've been **born again**, is an adopted child of the Father and a best friend of Jesus. None of your sins will ever be counted against you. Ask God for the grace to be still and **rest** in his love for a moment.
3. **Elevate your love** for God and people above the pain of the snakebite. Remember that we forgive others because God forgave all of our wrong-ness. Bring this wrong to the cross and let the pain of Jesus pay for it. Realize that God desires this person to be a part of his bride. Your job is to show them the unconditional love that he has freely given to you. Forgive them. Ask God what to do if this person hurts you in this way again. Notice any Biblical principles that he puts into your mind and write down any verses that come to mind. Write a plan in case this happens again.
4. Whenever you remember the sting of their attack, bandage the wound by focusing on your identity as one who truly pleases the Father and the Son (as his bride). Remember that you have forgiven this person and **refuse the bitterness** offered by your enemy, the accuser of the brethren.
5. **Refuse to gossip** about your wound, knowing that backbiting will just return evil for evil. Instead, ask God whether or not he wants you to confront the person who wounded you. If so, God will show you how to let them know that they hurt you. Follow Matthew 18:15-17. If you need to, set boundaries with consequences.
6. Provide this person with **opportunities to rebuild your trust**. Be as wise as a serpent (the devil) but as harmless as a dove (the Holy Spirit). Realize that forgiveness is a realistic, positive attitude toward the relationship- not an offer to trust a viper. Pray for this person to know their identity as God's beloved, and to grow with their local church into the bride of Christ.



Making an Apology When You're Guilty

You can operate from your identity as one loved by God, even when you have wounded someone (either on purpose or by accident). God's love has already cleansed your sin.

1. Realize that you have bitten someone with your words or actions and they may be feeling resentful. **Stop and pray** about what you could have said or done differently. Receive God's forgiveness. Ask him when would be the best time to tell them what you wish you would have done differently, and ask for their forgiveness?
2. As you **prepare to approach** this person, remember this: if you have been **born again**, you are an adopted child of the Father. Your best friend is Jesus. All of your sin was permanently removed from your record because of his blood payment. Ask God for the wisdom and grace to stay at peace, whether the other person responds to you lovingly or sinfully.
3. Although your sin has been removed from heaven's record by the blood of Christ, God will still show you how to handle its consequences here on earth. Whether or not people forgive you doesn't affect your unconditional right standing before God. You can, however, hurt the person you've wronged even more, by not making things right. Ask God **what you can offer** to do for them that would help to rebuild their trust in you. Your reputation and your relationships are very valuable things. If you are hurting others because you are being hurt, go to the previous page. Make a plan with boundaries and consequences to protect everyone.
4. **Go make the apology** by telling them that you're sorry you didn't handle the situation in the right way. Tell them what you wish you would have done differently and ask for their forgiveness. If they were hurt, tell them that you want to rebuild their trust. Offer to pay for damages and/or spend time together.
5. **Guard your heart** with the shield of faith. When you feel guilt, use your imagination to bring it to Jesus on the cross and let him take the pain. After that, say no to the venom of shame and regret. If the person you have wounded attempts to guilt-trip or shame you, forgive them for that and treat it as a fresh wound (previous page).



What if the Relationship Doesn't Improve?

If you feel like you're giving 100% in an important relationship, but there are serious problems that aren't improving, ask yourself the following questions:

Have I asked God what he wants to do about this? ([Click HERE](#) to hear his answer.)

Have I collected Biblical ideas for solving my problem, and read their Bible contexts?

Have I checked with a trusted Christian friend or pastor to confirm these ideas?

Have I hurt anyone by gossiping about the situation, and if so, have I made that right?

Have I done something in this relationship to break trust that I could earn back?

Have I followed the entire process of forgiving and asking for forgiveness (last 2 pages)?

Have I asked God to search my heart for selfish or manipulative motives?

Have I considered whether I might be playing into another person's mind's games?

Have I asked God whether I need to set healthy boundaries (like always going into a separate room when I need to calm down, or someone else needs to calm down)?

Have I talked to God about what he's doing in my life through this situation?

After doing all of that:

Have I sat down with this person and asked them to listen to my perspective?

Have I really listened to their perspective without thinking about how to defend myself?

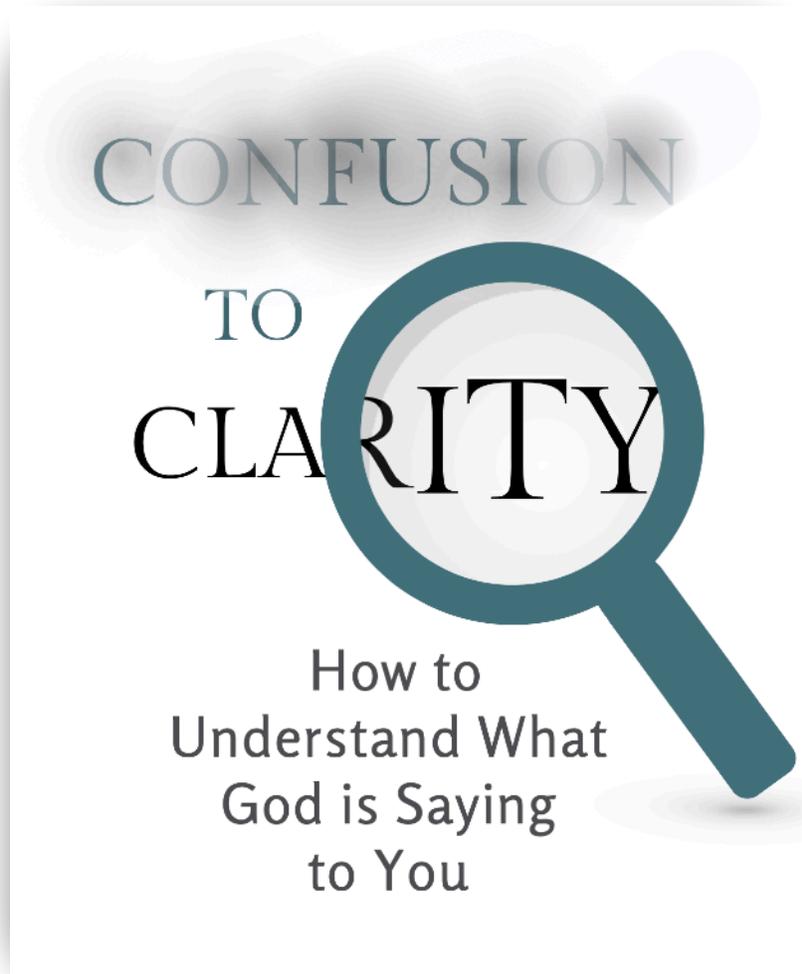
Am I praying consistently for both of us to understand each other and make changes?

If so, you've planted your seed of love into the dirtiness of this pain. God will bring change in His season. Meanwhile, establish boundaries with appropriate consequences for unhealthy behavior. If you need help learning how to do that, seek professional counsel.

(Disclaimer: We are not mental health professionals. Please seek appropriate care.)



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