**Forgiveness**

Forgiveness is probably the most important and difficult step for most people when it comes to healing. Unforgiveness is the cause for the enemies' foothold in Ephesians chapter 4, and in verse 32 Paul encourages us to love and forgive one another just as in Christ God has forgiven us. Paul says, “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, **forgiving one another**, even as God for Christ's sake **hath forgiven you**.

And again, in Colossians 3:12-13 we are encouraged, “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: **even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye**.”

Forgiveness **IS**:

* Forgiveness is a decision
* Forgiveness is an act of the will
* Forgiveness is a full pardon
* Forgiveness is obedience
* Forgiveness is freedom
* Forgiveness is a way of life
* Forgiveness is enforcing appropriate consequences and boundaries
* Forgiveness is trusting God to appropriate righteous judgement

Forgiveness is **NOT**:

* Forgiveness is not tolerance
* Forgiveness is not trust
* Forgiveness is not a feeling
* Forgiveness is not forgetting
* Forgiveness is not generosity
* Forgiveness is not enabling
* Forgiveness is not something a person deserves
* Forgiveness is not letting someone “off the hook”

Additional Considerations

* Forgiveness is an act of your will; it is not a feeling.
* When unforgiveness occurs in a relationship **both** individuals are negatively affected.
* It is not necessary for the other person to know that you are forgiving them. They may not even be aware that they have offended you, or they may have passed away, or are no longer in your life. This does not change your need to forgive.
* In addition to forgiving others, it is important to ask forgiveness where **you have offended**.