

Forgiveness

Week One

Centering Prayer:

Find a quiet place and center your heart upon God by silently saying, “Form in me,” as you breathe in, and “a loving heart” as you breathe out. Do this for a minute or two until you feel calmed and centered.

Prayer of Humility:

Gracious God, I have such a hard time truly being a loving and forgiving person. You know that all of our lives are filled with pain. Throughout our lives we have suffered through periods of turmoil, uncertainty, confusion, isolation, alienation, loneliness, illness, and helplessness. I have been hurt by life, by others, and by myself. It can be so much easier to hold onto my grudges, indignations, and frustrations than it can be to forgive. Yet you tell us that forgiving is one of the keys to living a deeper and more joyful life. Help me to form a forgiving heart so that I can live a life filled with your love.

Take time for silent prayer and reflection on your struggles with forgiveness, and give to God those impediments that stand in the way of your becoming more forgiving.

Continue in prayer: Thank you God for patiently listening to me, and help me to receive your guidance as it comes in the voice of the Holy Spirit and my heart. Help me to listen in faith.

Scripture Reading and Reflection:

Read Matthew 18: 21-22. Using your journal, reflect on the following questions:

- *The passage says that when someone sins against us, we are to forgive seventy times seven. What gets in the way of our forgiving others?*
- *When you have been able to forgive something significant, what made it possible?*
- *What can you do to be more forgiving in your life?*

Closing Prayer:

Take time to offer prayers for yourself, others, the church, the world. Also, take time to thank God for all the ways God has acted in your life whenever you have been forgiving.

Forgiveness

Week Two

Centering Prayer:

Find a quiet place and center your heart upon God by silently saying, “Form in me, O Lord,” as you breathe in, and “a forgiving heart” as you breathe out. Do this for a minute or two until you feel calmed and centered.

Prayer of Humility:

Eternal God, you are the loving God who takes our insults, ignorance, ingratitude, and infidelity, and responds not with anger but with forgiveness. We constantly push you to the margins of our lives, where you wait patiently with open arms ready for us to return. This is what you showed in your death on the cross. You were tortured, beaten, and crucified because of the human tendency to hate those who do not fit our molds. But instead of raining down fire and brimstone upon us, you rained down compassion, forgiveness, and light. You showed that even the destructiveness of human sin could not destroy your love for us. Help us to grow in our love for you so that we can live the lives of compassion and forgiveness you have shown us.

Take time for silent prayer and reflection on your struggles with forgiveness, and give to God those impediments that stand in the way of your becoming more forgiving.

Continue in prayer: Thank you God for patiently listening to me, and help me to receive your guidance as it comes in the voice of the Holy Spirit and my heart. Help me to listen in faith.

Scripture Reading and Reflection:

Read Luke 23: 32-38. Using your journal, reflect on the following questions:

- *What does this passage say about the nature of forgiveness?*
- *To what extent do you think you would be able to be this forgiving?*
- *What gets in the way of your being more forgiving?*
- *What concrete things can you do to be more forgiving in your life?*

Closing Prayer:

Take time to offer prayers for yourself, others, the church, the world. Also, take time to thank God for all the ways God has acted in your life whenever you have been forgiving.

Forgiveness

Week Three

Centering Prayer:

Find a quiet place and center your heart upon God by silently saying, “Help me to forgive others,” as you breathe in, and “as You have forgiven me” as you breathe out. Do this for a minute or two until you feel calmed and centered.

Prayer of Humility:

Holy God, your way is fairly simple to understand, but so hard to live. You call on us to be open to your transforming power, to let you enter us and mold our hearts to your will. But our sin stands in the way. We constantly seek our own ways over yours. We want to be the ones in charge, and we get angry with you whenever life does not turn the way we want, saying, “If God is so good, why would God let me struggle?” We get angry with you whenever we struggle, hurt, face uncertainty, or grapple with life’s pains. In other words, sin leads us to turn away from you because you have not done our will. Sin leads us to ignore your invitation to live lives of love, faith, compassion, righteousness, and grace. Sin leads us to keep you from transforming us and making me a person of your light, grace, and blessing. Help me to give you my sin, so that you can transform me into disciple of Christ.

Take time for silent prayer and reflection on your struggles with sin, and give to God those impediments that stand in the way of your becoming more forgiven and forgiving.

Continue in prayer: Thank you God for patiently listening to me, and help me to receive your guidance as it comes in the voice of the Holy Spirit and my heart. Help me to listen in faith.

Scripture Reading and Reflection:

Read Psalm 51. Using your journal, reflect on the following questions:

- *What things do you especially need God to forgive you for?*
- *What makes it hard for you to offer your sins to God and to ask for forgiveness?*
- *What can you do to offer God your sins more often, and to trust in God’s forgiveness?*

Closing Prayer:

Take time to offer prayers for yourself, others, the church, the world. Also, take time to thank God for all the ways God has acted in your life whenever you have been forgiving.

Forgiveness

Week Four

Centering Prayer:

Find a quiet place and center your heart upon God by silently saying, “Soften my heart,” as you breathe in, and “fill it with Your love” as you breathe out. Do this for a minute or two until you feel calmed and centered.

Prayer of Humility:

You call on me to be more forgiving to others, especially those close to me who have rejected me, hurt me, and ignored me. Lord, you know it is so difficult. My pride gets in the way. I have learned throughout my life that I need to stand up for myself, not be pushed around, and show no sign of weakness. This flies in the face of forgiveness, for to be forgiving I have to back down, allow myself to be hurt, and be weak. I have to walk willingly into an uncertain realm in which there are no rules other than love. It is hard to live in this uncertain realm because I don’t know how others will react. If I forgive, will others walk all over me? Will they see me as inconsequential? Will they think I am a fool? Will I lose control over my life? All of these are possibilities if I become more forgiving. Help me to let go of my pride and fears so that in being more forgiving I can trust in you and you alone.

Take time for silent prayer and reflection on your struggles with forgiveness, and give to God those impediments that stand in the way of your becoming more forgiving.

Continue in prayer: Thank you God for patiently listening to me, and help me to receive your guidance as it comes in the voice of the Holy Spirit and my heart. Help me to listen in faith.

Scripture Reading and Reflection:

Read Luke 15: 11-32. Using your journal reflect on the following questions:

- *In what ways are you like the son? In what ways like the father? In what ways like the bother?*
- *What gets in the way of your being more like the father?*
- *On a concrete level, what particular things can you do to become more like the father?*

Closing Prayer:

Take time to offer prayers for yourself, others, the church, the world. Also, take time to thank God for all the ways God has acted in your life whenever you have been forgiving.