

A PRACTICAL PATH TOWARD FORGIVENESS

FORGIVENESS IS BOTH A DECISION AND A PROCESS. YOU DON'T HAVE TO FINISH THE JOURNEY TODAY. SIMPLY TAKE THE NEXT STEP AND LET JESUS MEET YOU THERE.

1

ACKNOWLEDGE THE WOUND

- WHAT DID IT FEEL LIKE, AND WHAT DID I LOSE?
- WHAT CHANGED BECAUSE OF IT, AND WHAT AM I STILL GRIEVING?
- PEOPLE CANNOT RELEASE PAIN THEY HAVE NEVER HONESTLY NAMED.

2

UNDERSTAND THE PROTECTION

- WHAT IS MY ANGER PROTECTING? (ANGER ISN'T THE ENEMY, IT SIMPLY TELLS YOU WHICH DIRECTION TO LOOK FOR WHAT NEEDS HEALING.)
- WHAT DO I FEAR WOULD HAPPEN IF I FORGAVE?
- FORGIVING DOES NOT MEAN APPROVING THE OFFENSE OR ESCAPING WISE CONSEQUENCES

3

DECIDE WHAT KIND OF FUTURE YOU WANT

- WHO DO I WANT TO BECOME, AND WHAT IS RESENTMENT PRODUCING IN ME?
- WHAT WOULD FREEDOM AND WHOLENESS LOOK LIKE?
- DO I WANT THE OFFENSE TO REMAIN THE ORGANIZING CENTER OF MY LIFE?

4

RELEASE THE DEBT TO GOD (PRAYER)

"GOD, WHAT HAPPENED WAS WRONG, & I CANNOT HEAL MYSELF BY REPLAYING IT. I SURRENDER THIS DEBT TO YOU & PLACE IT IN YOUR HANDS. HELP MY SOUL TRUST YOU, & GIVE ME THE WISDOM & STRENGTH TO KNOW HOW & WHEN TO ESTABLISH HEALTHY BOUNDARIES OR NECESSARY PROTECTIONS."

5

LET GOD WRITE A BETTER STORY

- WHAT OLD STORY HAS THE WOUND TAUGHT ME ABOUT MYSELF, OTHERS, OR GOD?
- WHAT TRUTH FROM SCRIPTURE SPEAKS LOUDER THAN THAT STORY?
- WHAT HAPPENED MATTERED, BUT IT DOES NOT OWN ME. CHRIST CAN BRING LIFE FROM THIS PLACE OF DEATH.

6

PRACTICE GOODNESS, EMPATHY, AND MEANING WISELY

- HOW CAN I REFUSE RETALIATION WITHOUT EXCUSING OR MINIMIZING WHAT HAPPENED?
- CAN I RECOGNIZE THE OFFENDER'S HUMANITY WHILE STILL HOLDING THEM ACCOUNTABLE?
- WHAT WISDOM, COMPASSION, COURAGE, OR MEANING CAN GOD FORM IN ME?

7

DETERMINE THE RELATIONAL RESPONSE

- IS REPENTANCE PRESENT IN ACTIONS, NOT MERELY WORDS? IS THIS PERSON SAFE?
- CAN TRUST BE REBUILT, AND WHAT BOUNDARIES ARE REQUIRED?
- FORGIVENESS CAN BE FREELY OFFERED; RECONCILIATION AND RESTORED RELATIONSHIP REQUIRE WISDOM.

DON'T RUSH. DON'T WALK ALONE. COME BACK AS NEEDED.