



FRESH START



Processing the Issues of Your Heart

Participant Guide

TABLE OF CONTENTS

An Overview of the Six-Part Process

Part 1: Offense, Hurt, and Loss

Part 2: Affect

Part 3: Response

Part 4: Pour Out Your Heart

Part 5: Forgive

Part 6: Release

Your Next Steps

You Can Be Forgiven Prayer



Fresh Start Process
Welcome



Processing the Issues of Your Heart

Participant Guide

An Overview of the Six-Part Process

Welcome to Fresh Start! We are so glad you're here.

Whether you found us on social media, someone sent you a link, or you are following along with your group, we believe it's no coincidence you are with us. It takes courage to show up. Thank you for stepping in. You may be seeking answers, healing, or even just curious about what true freedom for your heart looks like. You have come to the right place.

What is this process all about? Simply stated, your freedom. This may sound cliché, but if we could just step into the room with you, and look you in the eye, we would say, we are serious. This is a chance to have a Fresh Start. Maybe our circumstances are different, but we can relate to where you may be. Hopeless? Desperate? Confused? Do any of these sound familiar? We want you to know that no matter what point you are at, freedom is available. It's not too late or too dark. You're not too far gone. Authentic transformation for your heart and your mind is available now, for free. No catches or gimmicks.

Fresh Start exists to see all people set free from the effects of offense, hurt, and loss. None of us escapes this life without being offended, hurt, or having some kind of loss. And don't we all know, there was an opportunity to be offended before breakfast this morning.

You see, Fresh Start is a ministry, yes! But, the heartbeat of this ministry is just real-life people, like you and me. People who have walked and crawled through tragedy and suffering. We are people who have been through heartaches, disappointments, and relational conflicts. We want to help you get your life back, so you can live to share your battle wounds and victory stories. We want you to experience the freedom that is available when you show up for more. Freedom to be known. Freedom to love and be loved. Freedom to truly forgive.

Consider this your invitation to join us, as we unpack how to get free and stay free. Through these videos, we will help you identify sources of pain, learn the process of forgiveness, and find your pathway to freedom.

Let's set some ground rules before we get started, okay?

No pressure, just opportunity! What that means is, we are going to challenge you to keep taking steps toward truth and transformation, but we will not force or pressure you. When you are ready, you get to take the next step. Deal? We will only speak the truth. No sugar coating. No weird stuff. We tell the truth, and we ask the same from you. Your story is not ours to share. What's heard or shared will remain confidential.

So, what brought you here?

An Overview of the Six-Part Process

What freedom do you need today?

What's keeping you chained? Maybe it's an addiction, betrayal, grief, feeling hopeless in a relationship, or even distorted thoughts rolling around in your own heart and mind. True freedom has no limit to what's available. Nothing is too dark, and no heart is beyond the touch of God's intervention.

Your goal in this process may be to have a better marriage, healing for your body, live a debt-free life, get rid of anxiety, or finally have healthy relationships with your family. These are wonderful things. And God cares about them.

But, we are going to let you in on one of the 'keys' to the process from the beginning:

The Ultimate Goal in this Six- Part Process is freedom for your heart.

True freedom comes from intimacy with God above all else. So, let's start with a Question for you to ask yourself: Do I desire intimacy with God more than I desire _____? Fill in the blank in with whatever you are choosing to process.

You don't have to have your answer right now. Your answer may be a flat out, "NO!" The hope is that over time, you will be able to say without a shadow of a doubt, "YES! I desire intimacy with God above all else." Many of us are not here yet. You may not even have the desire to know God at this point.

This six-part process will help guide your heart to the areas where God wants to bring in more of Himself to heal and love you. If you are willing to go on this journey, He can do a miracle!

So how does this work? Let's take a deeper look.

In Proverbs 4:23 God says,

"Above all else guard your heart, for from it flow the well-springs of life."

If your heart was the only wellspring or drinking source from which others could drink, how "healthy" would they be? A sobering question, isn't it? Whose heart hasn't been affected by someone or something? But even if your wellspring has become "polluted" with unforgiveness or bitterness, you can still have a "Fresh Start" for your heart! We pray as you process the issues of your heart by writing out your responses to the questions, you will be free from your past, thrive (not just survive) in the present, and reap the benefits of a hope-filled future!

An Overview of the Fresh Start Process

There are six parts to this process. Each part is designed to help you unpack and resolve the issues of offense, hurt, and loss in your life.

In Parts 1- 2- 3, we focus on “Going Horizontal”

In the first three parts, you will identify the one relationship, hurt, or offense you want to process. It’s about getting all that’s happened out on the table. What happened, how did it affect you, and what was your response? God cares deeply about everything that has happened to us. He doesn’t want us to ignore, minimize, or forget about all that we have been through in our life. Things that have been done to us or things we have done-He cares about all the details of our lives. He not only wants to hear about them, but He also wants to hear how they impacted us and made us feel, think, and respond. Then, He wants to heal our hearts. And that’s where we move into the second section, Parts 4-5-6.

In Parts 4 - 5 - 6, we focus on “Going Vertical”

In this section, you are moving from just sharing your story and feelings with others to sharing them with your Heavenly Father. You will pour out your heart, learn to forgive, and truly release the hurts that have been keeping you chained. There is a difference between dumping or venting your feelings, as opposed to taking them to God who has the ultimate solution. This is what makes the Fresh Start process different and biblical. God cares about every detail of your story. And He has the answer! When you ‘Go Vertical,’ you share with God the offense, hurt, and loss you are processing. This is the beginning of intimacy with Him! You are sharing with God, maybe for the first time, how this part of your story is impacting you. He wants to take time to listen to your heart. All of it. This part of the process is for everyone, but will be incomplete without a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus. When you have a relationship with the Lord, you can receive the gift of forgiveness and grace He freely offers. If you don’t have that today, you can still start the process. So, let’s get started!

If you haven’t yet, download the Processing the Issues of Your Heart Booklet, grab something to write on (we recommend a notebook to give yourself plenty of space), and something to write with!

Before you begin, it is wise (and necessary) to pray. By praying and dedicating your time to the Lord, you give Him permission to do the healing work that only He can do. You are saying you are willing to cooperate with what God wants to do in your heart and life for your good. You are participating with God’s mission for your life. He is after your heart, desiring to see all of your story redeemed for your good and His glory.

An Overview of the Fresh Start Process

Let's pray:

Father, I praise Your Holy and Mighty Name. You are Creator, Sustainer, Healer, and my Protector. You are the Great I AM. I thank You for leading me to this time with You, to hear from You, sit with You, and reveal my whole heart to You. I give You total access to my heart and ask You to "search me, know me, test me, and fully examine my heart and mind." I desire to be free from all that is impacting my heart, mind, and body. Help me, Lord, to identify the offenses, hurts, and losses in my life. Show me the effects they have had and are having on me. Lead me each step of the way. Show me where to start, and give me the strength to finish the process fully. I desire full healing. I need a miracle, Lord. I am weary from carrying this. Open my heart, mind, eyes, and ears to hear You, Lord. Give me Your heart for my story. Illuminate any details, memories, or pieces of my story I may have forgotten. I give You total access, Lord. Above all else, I desire intimacy with You. I dedicate this entire process to you and the work I will do with You. Give me the strength and space to get through what You are asking of me. Block out distractions and all that would keep me from finishing well. I am choosing to trust You, Lord. I entrust the outcome to You. In Jesus' victorious Name, I pray, Amen.

Are you ready? Let's get started!



Processing the Issues of Your Heart

Participant Guide

Part 1: Offense/Hurt/ Loss

"Who or What is in my Gap?"

"Who or What has offended or hurt you?"

"What have you lost?"

What happened? Who hurt you? What have you lost? Let's start with your story.

Your journey of freedom begins first with honesty. In this part of the process, you will identify one significant area of offense, hurt, or loss that is hindering your life. Whether it was an event that happened recently, or something from when you were a child; no detail is too small. No pain is too great. Your goal is to choose one person or event to process.

You may be thinking- "Why do I really need to process all of this?"

This is a totally normal response. You might even have some of these common questions rolling around in your heart: "I already forgave or let go." "I don't think about this or hardly even remember what happened." "I don't want to make a big deal of this." "It's nothing compared to what he/she has or is going through." "I don't want to rehash all of these things."

In Psalm 66:18, God says, "If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened." No one lives up to God's design. Not one of us is perfect or righteous in the eyes of God. This is not a statement of condemnation, but rather an invitation to freedom offered for your heart. Surrender to the reality that we all have 'stuff' God wants to heal at a deeper level.

One of the biggest lies we can succumb to is, "My story is not worth investigating or digging into, because it's not going to change anyway, and it's not that big of a deal." But, if we "agree with God," and what He thinks about what hurts us, and what He says He can and will do with sin and pain, then we can be free!

God NEVER dismisses what's important to us.

God NEVER ignores our aching hearts.

God NEVER gives approval to sin we commit, or sin committed against us.

God NEVER compares our pain to others. So, why should we?

To understand how God sees our stories, it's helpful to think of our offenses, hurts, and losses as, 'GAPS.'

Part 1: Offense/Hurt/ Loss

"Who or What is in my Gap?"

"Who or What has offended or hurt you?"

"What have you lost?"

Who or What is in the GAP in your story?

The GAP is the difference between God's design for relationship and your life's experience.



The offenses, hurts and losses you experience in your life are what we call the GAP. Your experience will always fall short of God's design until you get to Heaven. Until you agree with God's design for relationship, you will not experience the freedom and peace that is available to you. So, we compare our stories only to God's design, which is found in His Word. In what ways does your story, relationships, and heart not line up with His design? This GAP is what you process. When you process, you must consider all the ways the other person/situation is not according to God's design.

Only Jesus can fill the GAP in your life. If you desire or experience anything instead of intimacy with the Lord, you will always be disappointed. Only Jesus fills the GAP. Only Jesus satisfies. When you allow Jesus to fill the GAP in your life, you can begin to experience the freedom and peace that God always had in mind for you.

So, Who or What is in the GAP in your story?

To help you better identify where to begin, let's start by looking at the questions in the booklet.

Part 1: Offense/Hurt/ Loss

"Who or What is in my Gap?"

"Who or What has offended or hurt you?"

"What have you lost?"

Start by praying through the scripture, and asking the Lord to reveal to you anything He wants you to know. What does the scripture say to you?

"Test me, O Lord, and try me, examine my heart and my mind..." – Psalm 26:2 (NIV)

A. List specific offenses or hurts, and the person(s) involved:

- People who have rejected you in some way
- People or situations where you have been violated or abused
- Conflicts involving family, friends, work, church, or others
- Divorce or separation
- Other examples through your life

B. List significant losses that you have experienced in your life:

- Loss of job
- Loss of health
- Loss of a relationship due to conflict, separation, divorce or death
- Loss of a dream for your life or your future involving marriage, children or career

Two Key Notes:

-Think of Parts a and b as an inventory of all offenses, hurts, and losses. You may find it helpful to write out your story or a timeline of your life. This allows you to identify themes showing up. Once you have written specific hurts, offenses, or losses, begin to ask God where He wants you to start processing.

-It is not biblical to process yourself. Only God can forgive you. When you follow the parts of the process, you will deal with the thoughts, behaviors, and wrong related actions or attitudes you had toward yourself or others. And God will deal with 'your role' in relation to the situation or relationship you choose to start with.

Part 1: Offense/Hurt/ Loss

"Who or What is in my Gap?"
"Who in my life is least like Jesus?"

C. From your previous responses, choose one person/loss to process:

Once you have decided where to begin, you will deal with the one person, event or loss you have chosen going forward. So, answer the questions from here on, in relation to that one person you are processing. There may be many offenses, hurts, and losses that come from this one person or event. List them. But, in regard to your list, stay focused on the one person or loss you are processing.

You may find it helpful to start with the earliest wound or someone from your immediate family of origin (father, mother, sibling, grandparent, or someone who represented them). We often find what we are experiencing today is an effect or direct result of a past experience of offense, hurt, or loss-typically from the family of origin. Choose ONE person or loss to process at a time. Who or What is in your GAP?

Here are some examples:

The offending person is: My Mom

The offense, hurt, or loss is: Loss of a relationship, loss of a dream, loss of protection, loss of childhood

Illustration: The Weed



When you want to pull a weed, it may be tempting to just yank at the top-the part you can see with your eyes. But we know if we don't dig down a little, remove some dirt, get to the root, and eliminate the pesky thing growing, it will just be a matter of time before it comes back. Our hearts and stories are much like the weed. We all have areas that need attention and care to get healthy, so let's start with the root. For processing, we find that dealing with the root of the problem- your earliest wound- will almost always take care of the whole weed and root out problems you may be currently facing. God is in the healing business, not the bandaid business! He doesn't just want to cover up the roots so problems can come back. He wants us to grow!



Processing the Issues of Your Heart

Participant Guide

Part 2: Affect

"What is in your heart?"

"How have you been affected?"

In Part 2, we begin to explore the ways you have been impacted by this offense, hurt, or loss.

What is in your heart? How have you been affected by this offense, hurt, or loss?

Take some time to pause and consider what your thoughts have been toward this person or event. What have your thoughts been toward yourself? Toward God? What have your feelings been? Or, have you been numbing them for so long you don't even feel anymore? Describing your thoughts and feelings in detail begins to release the weight in your heart. Present feelings are indicators of past pain.

Illustration: The Water Bottle

Would you be able to hold an unopened full plastic water bottle in one hand for 5 minutes? You may say, "Yes, no problem!" If we asked you to hold your arm straight out and hold the same bottle, you probably could do that, too, for a time. But, if I asked you to hold it for seven, eight, nine, or ten minutes while talking about something else, you may begin to feel the weight of the bottle is too much to handle. "I can handle it," is what we say to ourselves. But over time, the weight of our struggles (from the past or present) begins to be too much to carry on our own. When dealing with the effects of the 'GAP' we are processing, the stress of life is too much to handle in our own strength. It is important to acknowledge the weight and resolve it according to God's design. You weren't designed to carry the weight of your struggles alone.

Let's dive in to the questions in the booklet.

Part 2: Affect

"What is in your heart?"

"How have you been affected?"

Start by praying through the scripture and asking the Lord to reveal to you anything He wants you to know. What does the scripture say to you?

*"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts."
– Psalm 139:23 NIV*

A. What have your thoughts been in relation to the ONE person or loss you are processing?

These could be thoughts toward yourself and thoughts toward God as well. Think of this as the 'internal conscious tapes' in your mind. Things you may never say out loud, but have thought or continue to think. Ex: "I hate it when you do that." "I will always be this way." "He is so dumb," "Why does he have to do that?" "Will she always ignore me?" There are endless possibilities of what our thoughts could be. These are just a few examples. The goal is to begin to get in touch with the way you thought or maybe are still thinking.

B. What have your thoughts been toward the person involved (as applicable)?

Narrow in your focus a little more now, and specifically write out the thoughts you had or have towards the person you are processing. It may take some time to really 'go back' to the way you used to think, especially if this was a formative relationship from the time of your early childhood. Give yourself time, and ask God to help you. It's critical to begin to understand the ways you have been thinking. It helps you to understand your current struggles.

C. What have your feelings been?

Feelings indicate something is going on internally. If you have been a person who has learned to numb or shut off your emotions and feelings, this part may take some time and soul searching. You may think you are 'just fine,' but over time, the weight of your struggles becomes too much to handle. Be specific and transparent with how your heart is feeling. Use the word bank as a tool to get you started. You may also have other words that apply. Sometimes, it helps to put our feelings into sentences. Take time to write out how this specific offense, hurt, or loss has affected you.

Here are some examples:

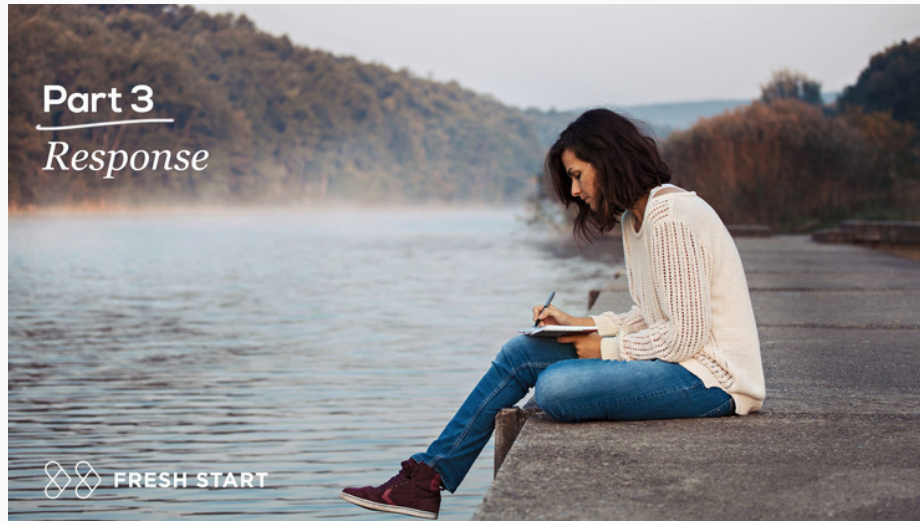
"I feel anxious when _____."

"I felt lonely when _____."

"I feel angry when _____."

"When he _____, it made me feel rejected."

This part is critical to your freedom later on in the process. Do not move forward until you have been able to identify the feelings in your heart and how this specific offense, hurt, or loss has been affecting you.



Processing the Issues of Your Heart

Participant Guide

Part 3: Response

"How have you responded to this specific offense, hurt, or loss?"

"What have you decided?"

"Full disclosure: get real with God."

How have you responded to your pain? What have you said or done in response to the offense, hurt, or loss you experienced? Have you made any internal agreements or decisions because of your pain? This is about full disclosure. What has your part been?

Start by praying through the scripture and asking the Lord to reveal to you anything He wants you to know. What does the scripture say to you?

"See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

- Psalm 139:24 (NIV)

A. What have you said or thought in response to this offense, hurt, or loss?

Ask God to show you YOUR part in relation to this offense, hurt, or loss. What have you said? It could be something you said to the person you are processing, to others about the person or situation, or just said internally to yourself. It could also be things you did not say, but perhaps should have. Ask God to help you. Acknowledge your role and response. Seek to get all of your offensive ways disclosed. Write them down in your process. There is no shame when coming to God with a humble heart seeking to get free. He can handle it. Don't leave anything hidden or in the dark. It is imperative for you to be totally honest here. Keeping any response you are ashamed of, secret, will keep you from being free. You don't want to unwittingly leave any opportunity for the enemy to legally accuse you of your sinful response, and keep you from the freedom that God wants you to experience.

B. What have you done in response to this offense, hurt, or loss?

This could be something you did when you were little, growing up, or even yesterday. Think of these as the actions beyond the words: the ways in which you've acted out. You may also have examples of things you have 'not done' but could have. There could also be ways you have responded to try and protect, comfort or punish yourself.

Examples:

- Yelling, hitting, getting aggressive
- Ignoring, controlling with silence
- Could have spoken up, but were afraid.
- Could have told the truth, but chose differently.
- Self-harm, eating too much, too little (disorders), suicidal thoughts/attempts, drug or alcohol abuse, sexual promiscuity or acts outside of God's design, gossiping, lying, seeking pleasure, comfort, or approval outside of God's design, etc.

*It is important to remember, no one is perfect! Not one of us lives up to God's design. As you acknowledge and begin to release these responses, remember it is for your freedom not for condemnation!

Part 3: Response

"How have you responded to this specific offense, hurt, or loss?"

"What have you decided?"

"Full disclosure: get real with God."

C. What have you decided?

Include any judgments and vows you have made regarding the offending person, yourself, God, or the loss you have experienced.

What have you 'decided' internally due to the GAP you are processing?

We call these judgments, vows, or internal agreements. These would be the subconscious things you say to yourself or others. This could be the first time you are aware of all the ways you have been 'deciding' to do things or not to do things because of these hurts. Most people begin to realize there has been a negative conversation going on within their hearts and mind- for years. Typically (though not every time) vows and judgments are found in 'always' and 'never' statements.

Examples of judgments/vows/agreements:

"I will never be hurt again." "He will always be that way." "I would never do that to anyone." "I am not worthy of love." "I would never treat my children that way." "I will never marry a spouse like them." "I will always protect my children." "He is such a_____." "She will always be_____." "He won't change." "I will never be in an out-of-control situation again."

Although these statements aren't all "bad," whom do they put in control? You! These 'promises to self' or statements of independence keep us in control. God created us to be dependent upon Him, not live life independently of Him.

Have you made any internal agreements or decisions because of your pain?

This is about continued full disclosure. What has your part been? Identifying these judgments, vows, and agreements are CRITICAL pieces to the process and your freedom. Make sure you leave plenty of time to explore this area and ask God to reveal to you the judgments/vows/agreements you have made. Our words (spoken or unspoken) have the power to bring life or death. You may begin to realize the destructive power these words are having on your relationships with others and also on your heart. This part is vital to your freedom so do not hold back!

****Note:** By acknowledging your role/response, you are in NO way saying that you are the sole one responsible for the offense, hurt or loss. You are NOT approving and excusing what the offender did. You are not saying the pain did not matter. This is the first step in doing things God's way and beginning to lay down the hurt in a new way, so that healing can begin.



Processing the Issues of Your Heart

Participant Guide

Part 4: Pour Out Your Heart

"Go vertical"

"Prayer to the Lord"

It's time to get real. Get all those thoughts, dreams, hopes, and unmet desires out of your heart and onto paper! What do you really want? What is the true desire of your heart? What could have been different? What has been missing? God cares about these details.

Start by praying through the scripture and asking the Lord to reveal to you anything He wants you to know. What does the scripture say to you?

"Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your hearts to Him, for God is our refuge."

– Psalm 62:8 (NIV)

"...I pour out my complaint before Him..."

– Psalm 142:1-2 (NIV)

A. Pour out your heart to the Lord. Write out exactly how you feel.

Lord, this is how I feel...

Include any and all complaints, how the ongoing effects of pain are hurting you, and share any poison in your heart. Don't hold back. If you don't get it out here, talking to God, it will still allow bitterness to fester in your heart. Don't be afraid to be vulnerable and share it all. *This part can be done by anyone, but the process seems awkward and is incomplete if you do not have a relationship with the Lord. You are now shifting your focus from just telling your story to others to pouring out your true heart before your Heavenly Father. You are going vertical. Once you have repented of your sins and surrendered your whole heart to God, asking him to be the Lord of your life and Forgiver of your sins, you have received what we call the "Ultimate Fresh Start." You can be confident that your sins can be forgiven. Go to: www.stepuptolife.com for more information. And be sure to see the video, "The Ultimate Fresh Start: You Can Be Forgiven" on the Fresh Start website or app.

B. Keep going-Express your unmet desires to the Lord.

Lord, this is what I'm disappointed or upset about, or wish would have happened (or not have happened)...

This is your chance to be totally honest. Tell the Lord in writing what you are disappointed about, what you wish would've happened, or not have happened. Don't hold back. You are worthy of love and affection. God wants to hear your heart. He cares about you and all the big and small things that are impacting you. This is your time to sit before God and get it all out. There is nothing too foolish, too small, or too dark to share. He can handle your sadness, anger and pain. He already knows and sees. And, He cares deeply. He is waiting for you to come to Him, maybe for the first time in a long time, or ever.

Part 4: Pour Out Your Heart

"Go vertical"

"Prayer to the Lord"

C. Express your current desires to the Lord.

Tell God what you want in this relationship, along with your "best case or ideal scenario." Think BIG! Don't hold back. You can trust God with your dream, even if it seems unattainable. Don't let 'reality' or 'expectation' keep you from expressing to God the desires of your heart. When pain comes in, dreaming can get shut down. This is your permission to begin to dream again. Yes, it is scary, but it is time. There are no limits when it comes to sharing your desires and dreams. What has been hidden or lost for so long, or seems impossible, but is still the desire of your heart, write that down. It matters.

D. Choose to give Sacrificial Thanks to the Lord (VITAL PART to FREEDOM).

Tell the Lord in writing you are giving a sacrificial thanks for the situation and the circumstances, and that you are willing to submit to however He wants to use it in your life for His purposes, for your good, and for His glory.

Spend some time meditating on these scriptures. You may need to take a break. Go for a walk. Turn on some worship music. Do not skip over or rush this part. Let the concepts settle into your heart. This is a pivotal point to your freedom. You are giving a SACRIFICIAL thank-offering for all the offenses, hurts, and losses that have occurred. This is different from being grateful or feeling thankful for the hurt. This part is choosing to submit to the sovereignty of God. Yes, the 'silver lining' and the good that did or could come from the situation is okay. But, we are, 'Going for the Gold', which means, even if you don't see any good that comes from this GAP, will you still offer a sacrificial thanks to the Lord? The world will call this part foolish. This may even feel like a death in your heart, because it is. You are surrendering your ways, your plans, and the way you wish things would have gone or will go. This part is about obedience to the Lord. Offering to God a sacrificial thank offering means it will cost you something.

A sacrifice in the Old Testament was a blood sacrifice (example: the lamb). The sacrifice we make is dying to what we wish would have happened or not have happened. Jesus shed his blood for us. He paid the ultimate price and sacrificed His life for our sins. God is asking us to sacrifice by putting our desires, dreams and the way we wish things would have turned out on God's altar. When you choose to give sacrificial thanks, you are dying to the way you wish things would have turned out in this situation, relationship, or your life. It doesn't mean God doesn't care, but He's asking you to release control of all these areas and give them back to Him, the only One truly in control.

Part 4: Pour Out Your Heart

"Go vertical"

"Prayer to the Lord"

Up until this point, you have been getting all the poison out. You have been detoxifying yourself of all sin and trauma's poison. It has been impacting you emotionally, physically, and spiritually. You are choosing to make an active statement of trust as you step into offering sacrificial thanks.

John 12:24 says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."

When we are willing to die to the ways we wish circumstances would have turned out, there WILL be a resurrection. God loves to bring new life out of ashes.

So let's look at how to practically give a sacrificial thank offering:

Start by turning back to the list of offenses, hurts, and losses you wrote down in Part One. You will now go through each one and offer a sacrificial thanks. Remember, this is not feeling thankful or grateful. It is not saying it is okay, and it is not excusing the offender. You are taking away the power these offenses, hurts and losses have had over you and reclaiming ground from Satan. You are getting the poison out of your heart. It does feel foolish, backward, and like a death in your heart. But, remember, you are being obedient to the Lord, not your feelings! You can do this. It is hard. You may not feel like it, but you can still move forward in obedience. Ask the Lord to cause your feelings to catch up with the act of your will. He is faithful. He will do it.

Sacrificial Thanks IS "Going for the Gold:"

Ex: "Lord, I choose to give sacrificial thanks for being pushed in a corner at age 4."

Ex: "Lord, I choose to give You sacrificial thanks for being abandoned by my Dad."

Ex: "Lord, I choose to give You sacrificial thanks for my spouse choosing an affair."

Sacrificial thanks is NOT 'Silver Lining' Thanks:

Ex: "Lord, thank You that I am stronger and more empathetic for those going through addiction."

Ex: "Lord, thank You that I now see the importance of not abandoning my children."

*These are good to recognize and thank the Lord for, but they are not the goal.

Write down each one, using the list of offenses, hurts, and losses in Part 1 as your list and guide for what you are offering as a sacrifice of thanks.

- Sacrificial thanks positions you for the grace, peace and power to forgive.
- Sacrificial thanks is your verbal surrender to the sovereignty of God.
- Sacrificial thanks is proclaiming trust in God to use your circumstances for your transformation and His glory!
- We cannot be thankful or forgiving, until we give up control and put God back in His rightful place as Lord of our lives.



Processing the Issues of Your Heart

Participant Guide

Part 5: Forgive

"Forgive the one who has offended or hurt you."

"Cancel the debt."

Start by praying through the scripture, *The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant*. Ask the Lord to reveal to you anything He wants you to know. What does the scripture say to you?

A. Take responsibility for your sinful responses.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

- **"Lord, would You please forgive me for my sinful actions and attitudes..."**

Write out the ways in which you have been unforgiving or any other wrong attitudes as it relates to your process. This is where you take responsibility for your part in this situation and ask the Lord for forgiveness. Be totally honest here. There is no shame in surrendering all to the Lord. I was tempted to not share all I had done, especially how I had responded to personal relationships, but I decided to humble myself and risk people's judgment, knowing God was calling me to be transparent. Be specific and thorough for the sake of being obedient and getting free! It will be worth it.

- **"Lord, would You please forgive me for my judgments and vows..."**

If you gather with your group or even another trusted leader online or in person, this is the process you will use to break unholy decisions/judgments/vows/agreements you have made.

Go back to Part 3C. This is where you listed your judgments/vows/agreements.

Now, it is time to break/renounce each of these unholy decisions in the name of Jesus.

The format will be like this, "Repent, Renounce, Replace:"

Repent (Acts 26:20b, NKJV):

Example: "Lord, forgive me for saying I am not loved."

Renounce (2 Corinthians 4:2, NIV):

Example: "In the name of Jesus, I break the vow I am not loved."

Replace (Galatians 2:20, NASB):

Example: "I replace it with the truth that I am a dearly loved child of God."

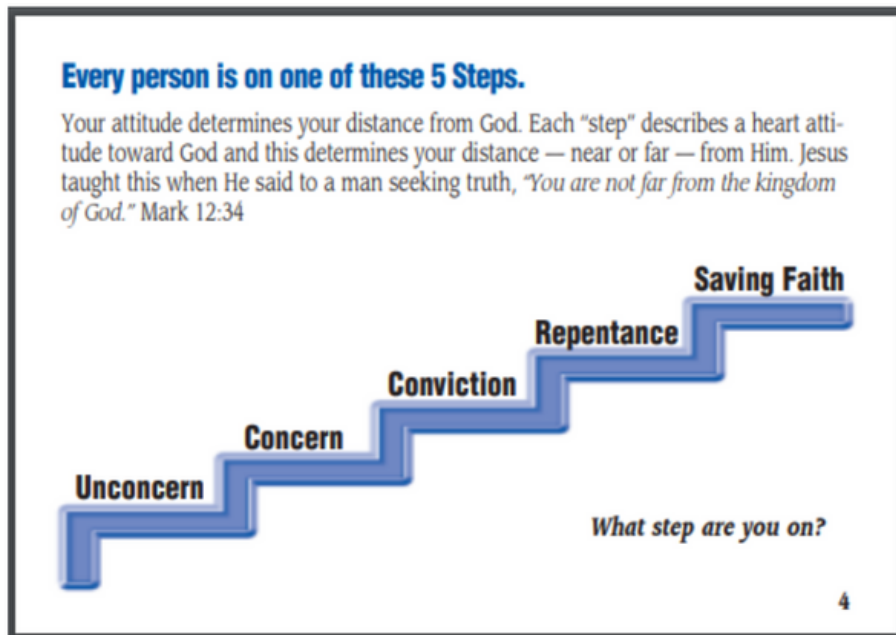
Part 5: Forgive

"Forgive the one who has offended or hurt you."

"Cancel the debt."

It's easy to think someone "owes" you because they hurt you. While you are waiting to be "repaid," your heart remains chained. Forgiveness doesn't excuse what he/she did. Forgiveness cancels the debt, so you can be free. In order to forgive, you must first be forgiven. Ask God to forgive you first for any of your wrong attitudes, responses or decisions. Then, you are ready to forgive those who have offended or hurt you. Forgive just like you were forgiven.

Once you have a relationship and have entered into Saving Faith through a total surrender of your life to Jesus, you can truly understand and fully receive His forgiveness, and then freely offer it. If you have any questions about your faith in the Lord, be sure to watch the attached video, "The Ultimate Fresh Start: You Can Be Forgiven," the biblical pathway to saving faith in Christ Jesus. To learn more about which step you are on, please see the full Step Up To Life booklet at www.stepuptolife.com.



Part 5: Forgive

"Forgive the one who has offended or hurt you."

"Cancel the debt."

B. Choose to forgive the person who has offended or hurt you. Write out your prayer to the Lord expressing your decision to forgive.

Include the specifics of those hurts or offenses and how they have affected you in the past, are affecting you in the present, and may affect you in the future.

Go back to Part 1 where you listed your offenses, hurts, and losses. Use this list as a guide to reference when being specific with what you are choosing to forgive

Example: "Lord, I choose to forgive my dad for never spending time with me, for being critical of everything I did..."

C. Declare to the Lord: "I cancel the debt! For my sake, they owe me nothing!"

On Forgiveness:

Forgiveness does not mean the behavior is okay.

- The person is not off the "hook."
- This individual is now on God's "hook."

Forgiveness has two cousins:

- Resentment: re/ sent - "If you do this to me, I will do this to you." (Send back to you)
- Bitterness: kills us spiritually. *Hebrews 12:12-15*

- If you don't forgive, you're saying that YOU holding the offender responsible, is more important than allowing GOD to handle it.
- Ask the Lord to help your emotions catch up with the act of your will to forgive.
- Forgiveness is a COMMAND, not an option. It is not based on feelings.
- Forgiveness is a decision to obey God.
- Forgiveness does NOT equal trust and does NOT automatically require entering back into that former relationship. This may not be wise or possible..



Processing the Issues of Your Heart

Participant Guide

Part 6: Release

"Let God handle it!"

"Release the offense, hurt, or loss to the Lord!"

Many times we hear people say, "I have forgiven!", but they realize they have never actually released the person who offended them and/or the circumstances back to the Lord. In holding on, they don't realize they are still trying to control. So, in this part, you are now ready to fully release this person, situation and effects to the Lord. It is time to get your heart back.

Release the person (the one you have forgiven) to the Lord. This painful situation is no longer yours. Let God handle the situation and/or the person(s) involved.

Release is getting the space in your heart back that was once leased out to pain. Take this person or painful circumstance off your hook, and place the person on God's hook. It's now His to deal with. Be willing to pray for the person.

Be forgiven. Be forgiving. Be free to be the person you were created to be!

Forgiven, Forgiving and Free!

Start by praying through the scriptures and asking the Lord to reveal to you anything He wants you to know. What do the scriptures say to you?

"Cast your cares on the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous fall. But you, O God, will bring down the wicked into the pit of corruption; bloodthirsty and deceitful men will not live out half their days. But as for me, I trust in You."

" Psalm 55:22-23 (NIV)

"Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. It if is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: 'It is Mine to avenge; I will repay,' says the Lord. On the contrary: 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:16-21 (NIV)

"...and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously." I Peter 2:23 (NASB)

What do these verses mean to you?

Part 6: Release

"Let God handle it!"

"Release the offense, hurt, or loss to the Lord!"

A. Entrust the person and/or the situation to the Lord.

Write in the form of a prayer, who or what you are now entrusting to the Lord.

B. Bless and pray for the person who has offended or hurt you.

"Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing...'" Luke 23:24 (NIV)

"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you..." Matthew 5:44 (NKJV)

You may want to include forgiving any future offenses or hurts with this person or anyone else related to this relationship, hurt or loss.

C. "Lord, will You please help me to take my thoughts captive to obey You?"

From this point going forward, you are choosing to renew your mind—actively living out the new revelations and insights God has given you through forgiveness.

Romans 12:2

Express to the Lord in prayer your desire to actively live out the truth God has shown you in your process.

"We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." 2 Corinthians 10:5 (NASB) 1995

"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." Romans 12:2 (NASB)

For closure purposes, we want to encourage you to take your thoughts captive to obey the Lord. What this means is: the enemy will try to re-infect your heart. This is where you will need to remember that you have chosen to forgive the person who offended you! You are not going to listen to the lies of the enemy. He will try to remind you again of all the hurt you once experienced. You have forgiven! Stand, and hold fast to your decision! Resist the enemy to take up an offense again, and praise God for the victory He has given you through forgiveness!

"May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer." Psalm 19:14 (NIV)



Processing the Issues of Your Heart

Participant Guide

Next Steps: Your Journey to Freedom

Congratulations!! You have walked through the first of what we hope to be many processes in your journey to freedom. There is a reason we break this process into parts and not steps that you check off your list. Simply put, it is a process of obedience to the Lord leading to freedom

Fresh Start is the gospel applied to your heart. This process is designed to be a tool in your tool belt for the rest of your life.

Learn it! Use it! And repeat!

There is always more with the Lord!

So, what are your next steps?

No matter where you are on your journey, we hope that you will stay connected and that this is the beginning of an exciting and worthwhile journey in becoming whom you were created to be.

- Get in a processing group! *Check the website for availability in-person or online.
- Begin another process!
- Receive more freedom through Fresh Start's resources.
- Or, maybe you need to connect with someone to ask more questions about your first process.

Let's Pray:

Father God, thank You for the healing we have seen and experienced today. We know this is just the beginning, and we invite You into all the next steps for each heart. Lord, be with these brothers and sisters as they continue on in their journeys toward total freedom for their hearts, minds, bodies, and souls. We believe You are on a mission to see every heart in every nation free from the effects of offense, hurt, and loss. Help each of us to do our part in getting right with You, so we can help others to live the life they were created to live while here on earth. God, for those who have come to know You for the first time, we ask that You would meet them right where they are. Speak to them. Heal them. And give them comfort that in You, they are finally home and loved. Let them know they will never walk this road alone. We all need this reminder, Lord. We love You, God. We are excited about all that You have for each one of us. Help us to take the next step of obedience with You. We trust You, Lord, and we thank You for the gift of freedom that came from Your Son, Jesus Christ. It cost Him everything, including His life, so we could be free. Thank you, Lord. We love You, and pray all this in Your Holy Name, Jesus. Amen!



Processing the Issues of Your Heart

Participant Guide

The Ultimate Fresh Start: You Can Be Forgiven

We are so glad you are here!

It takes courage to continue to step forward into the necessary, but unknown parts of your story and journey. Up until this point in your life, you may have held back parts or all of your heart from fully surrendering to God. So, we want to extend an invitation to you. You can be forgiven!

We invite you to follow along in prayer in one of these ways:

- Follow the prayer prompt in the back of the "Processing the Issues of Your Heart Booklet."
- Follow along with the prayer in the "Ultimate Fresh Start Video."
- Read the, "You Can Be Forgiven," prayer on the website, app, or attached here.

You may have your own words and that is okay. As you follow these prompts in faith, trust Jesus to do the work only He can do, redeeming and cleansing your heart and making you His son or daughter.

We are excited about all that God is doing in you and are trusting the Holy Spirit to bear witness to your spirit that you are now in the family of God. And, as you have been forgiven, now you can forgive, because the Forgiver has moved inside you by His Spirit!

For more information, please stay connected with us:

freshstartforallnations.org

You Can Be Forgiven

(Sample Prayer from Fresh Start For All Nations)

"Lord Jesus, I desire to experience the ultimate Fresh Start and to be truly brought into Your family as Your son/daughter.

I confess and acknowledge that until this time, I have lived a "me first" life.

I confess pride, jealousy, envy, judging others, and (fill in the blank with other wrong attitudes).

Will you please forgive me for my wrong thoughts, words, and actions? (be specific here).

Lord, I am choosing to repent, to turn from my "me first" life, my own sinful ways, to Your way. I want to obey and follow You. Please forgive me for each and every one of the sins I am now naming (fill in the blank with the sins you are confessing....)

I now choose to yield totally to You as my Lord, knowing You can make any changes in my life that You consider best for me. I put my trust in You and You alone!

Thank You for forgiving and saving me! Thank You for moving inside me by Your Spirit. I can now forgive others as You have forgiven me.

I pray all of these things in the mighty name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!"