

## Spiritual Practice: Being Reconciled

The very thought of forgiving someone who has wronged you can be a difficult thing to process for some. The pain and hurt caused by someone else is hard to let go of. We often feel the need for justice or for them to get what they deserve because of the harm they have caused.

The only way we can forgive is by letting God re-narrate our lives in the context of the metanarrative of Jesus, who forgave his enemies and even died for them. This will lead to healing—the healing of ourselves—which is necessary if we are going to forgive someone who has hurt us.

We see in this passage of scripture Jesus is challenging us to understand that **forgiven people forgive people**.

Matthew 6:14 reads, *“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”*

Forgiveness from God and our forgiving others are tied together by Jesus. We need to hear how connected our forgiveness and God’s forgiveness are, not so we will go about trying to earn forgiveness by forgiving others, but so we will see the utter importance of being people who forgive.

**We can never hope to earn God’s forgiveness.** Our sins are too great, and we simply have nothing we could offer God to repay them. Once we stand firmly entrenched in the larger story of our own forgiveness, we can then forgive—a process that often takes time.

Forgiveness does not mean subjecting yourself to continued victimization. As Christ forgave us, so we also forgive. It is not something we do—it is something we participate in. That is the pattern of forgiveness. Jesus then is both the pattern and the power of forgiveness and reconciliation.

**This week take some time to ask Jesus to show you the places you have been holding onto unforgiveness.** Reflect on 2 Corinthians 5:17-19, acknowledging the work of forgiveness in your own life and the call to then extend forgiveness to others. Take some time to pray for the person who has harmed you. Often times it is as we pray for the other person that God works in our hearts and as one who has been forgiven much we can extend that same forgiveness to others.

Adapted from: *The Good and Beautiful Community*: James Bryan Smith. IVP Books.

