

Cultivate Reflection Guide

How to Pray Through Forgiveness Pastor Alfredo Ramos | July 16-17, 2022

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If there's one thing that seasoned Christians and new Christians can relate to, it's the struggle with prayer. What are we supposed to say to the God who created the universe? Does he really hear us? What if we get the words wrong? As a church, we'll explore these questions and more as we learn how to pray.

Our Reflection Guide is a tool to help you grow spiritually wise, relationally kind and emotionally healthy. Use it to start a REAL conversation in community or to cultivate God's word into your life through personal bible study. Choose the questions that encourage you to reflect and respond to what we're learning. Pair it with your bible, a journal or any resource that helps you learn. *It's not about getting through the content, but getting the content through you!*

Read: [Matthew 6:9-15 NIV](#)

Reflect: As you reflect on the weekend message, what most encouraged, instructed or challenged you? Is there a truth, promise or instruction you want to cultivate into your life and carry with you?

Respond:

1. We all have pain caused by other people, but problems begin when we don't process our pain. What is your initial reaction to painful situations or circumstances? Are you an isolator, an avoider, a retaliator or a forgiver?
 - Where do you think that reaction/response comes from? For example, is it how you were raised to deal with pain, part of your personality/instincts or a result of growing faith, maturity, etc.?
 - Pain is REAL, but so is God's ability to use it for growth or transformation in our lives. How have you seen God use painful experiences in your life for a greater purpose? How has prayer played a part in that?
2. The command to forgive can feel difficult and complicated. But as we learn to pray, we discover there is **more forgiveness in God than there is sin in us**. Reflect on that truth and respond to God – whether to His forgiveness for you or yours for others. He's a safe place for you to be REAL!
3. [Read Ephesians 4:30-5:2](#). Forgiveness will **transform us** SO THAT bitterness does not **transmit from us**.
 - Anger is a deceitful emotion often masking itself as righteous and just, but quickly multiplying into bitterness, resentment, envy, unkindness and unforgiveness. Is there anywhere in your life you're struggling with anger – with yourself, with God or with others?
 - Name what you're angry about, or any other resulting emotions, to God in prayer.
4. Pastor Alfredo shared that forgiveness is *“the opportunity to give someone else an identity that is not dependent on how they have failed you.”* Is there anywhere in your life that, with God's grace and strength, you're ready to release the pain others have caused you and move toward forgiveness?

Keep in mind, forgiveness is **NOT** forgetting, excusing sin, allowing hurtful people back into our life, or a one and done event. Forgiveness **IS** an invitation to trust your pain to God SO THAT you can pursue healing.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for revealing that forgiveness is a journey, and that my pain is not something I was meant to carry alone. Help me to be aware of my emotions and be honest with you about anger and unforgiveness so that I can pursue healing and wholeness. I need you, trusted community and a daily commitment to prayer to remind me that I am called to forgive in response to the way you have forgiven me. I love you and I trust my heart and my hurt to you. Amen.

Dig Deeper Opportunity

[Read Colossians 3:13](#). Forgiveness can seem impossibly generous. And even still, we will never be able to out give Jesus, who gave His life to forgive us. As you go about your week, ask the Holy Spirit to show you where and when you need to make allowances for others – whether it's faults and offenses or annoyances and pet peeves. Make note of how releasing those things to God impacts you physically, emotionally and relationally.