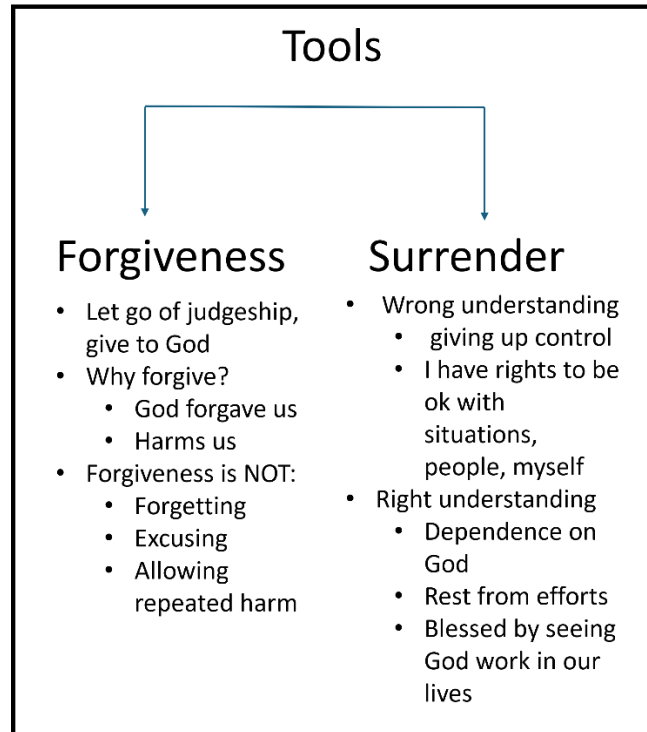




# Tools: Forgiveness and Surrender



## Forgiveness

Part of what we are equipped with when we receive Christ is a true ability to forgive and surrender. It's not us – it is the Holy Spirit working inside of us. These are tools that are at our disposal to use and they give us greater freedom than we have ever experienced before in our lives.

What is forgiveness? Forgiveness is a transaction, where you choose to give up the position of judge, jury and prosecuting attorney and give that to God. It is more than a feeling; it is an action you take to release the person who has harmed you or offended you. You are letting go of the desire to punish or harm the person or to let the anger continue to kindle into a bitter root.

Why do we forgive? There are two good reasons. When we become born again believers, God forgives all our sins – past, present and future – because of Jesus' death on the cross. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Up to this point, this is our status – that we deserve death. We have already been



spiritually dead – that happened to our descendants, Adam and Eve when they decided they wanted to be their own “gods” and ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. But our physical and eternal death is payment to God for the sins we commit in our life.

But Christ died for your sins, and you never met Him. He took all your sins, all my sins, all of every single person’s sin on the cross and paid the price so we could be free from that penalty. Romans 5:8 says, “but God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

So not only did He take all your sin upon Himself, so you don’t have to have an eternal death, but when we become born again believers, we get the opposite – an eternal life. And we are not just sitting on the sidelines hoping to get called in to substitute. We are on the team – Team Jesus. We are adopted into His Family, we are called Heirs, we inherit the Kingdom of God.

The other reason to forgive is purely selfish. When we hold unforgiveness, we are angry, frustrated, stressed, and this can lead to many other emotional and physical symptoms, and yet nothing may be happening to the person with whom we hold this unforgiveness. Sometimes, we struggle forgiving others even as born-again believers because we have some misconceptions about what forgiveness means and the actions required.

So here is what forgiveness is NOT:

- It is not forgetting what happened
- It is not excusing what happened or saying it is ok that it happened
- It is not saying “it’s ok if it happens again” and putting yourself in a position to be harmed again. It is healthy to create boundaries with people who want to cause you harm.

### **Questions to Ponder:**

How has this teaching helped you understand forgiveness?

Who do you need to forgive?

**Ephesians 4:32** *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

**Mark 11:25** *And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.*

### **Surrender**



If you are like many Christians, you may think that surrender means losing control or giving up something that you enjoy in exchange for some potentially uncomfortable or painful circumstance. Whatever the reason is, if we decide not to surrender, it keeps us from what our hearts long for – to see the glory of God realized and experienced in our personal lives.

The other thought about surrender is that I am giving up my rights. Here we are not talking about legal rights that you have with the government, your job, the football federation. We are talking about the rights you believe you have as a person interacting with other people. So, what are the rights you believe you have? "Things, people, or I must be a certain way in order for me to be okay."

Common misconceptions about surrender are loss of control/out of control, accepting that I will have difficult circumstances, things could get worse, or I have to let go of my desires.

So here is what surrender IS. Surrender is a position in your mind and heart that puts your dependence on God to live life. It is also an attitude of being willing for the Lord to use any circumstances in our lives to accomplish His purposes and to reveal Himself to us in very personal ways. When your heart and mind are surrendered to God, your actions will reflect that. What does that look like? When we surrender, we let go of our own efforts to manage and control the circumstances, people and our own expectations in our lives. Surrender allows us to truly rest from our own efforts to control and gives us the opportunity to see what God is doing in our lives in very personal and practical ways.

#### **Questions to Ponder:**

Did this change your understanding of surrender?

What are you holding onto that you could surrender to the Lord?

**Romans 12:1** *And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.*

**Hebrews 13:15** *Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name.*