

I will be talking about forgiveness.

My own definition of forgiveness: To forgive means to pardon or excuse; to no longer blame or be angry with someone who has done you wrong

According to Fr. Jonah, to forgive means to restore a bond of love and communion when there has been a rupture. Sin ruptures our relationship with God and others, as also do offenses taken and given among people. When the bond is broken with other people, we tend to objectify them and judge them, not seeing them as persons, but only as objects of our anger and hurt. This is our sinful reaction. We categorize people in terms of their transgression against us.

An example of God's forgiveness—and a model for our own—is the parable of the Prodigal Son. Think of the hurt of the father as the young son withdrew into the most selfish kind of rejection and rebellion. The father never ceased to love the son, and was watching and waiting for his return. When the son came to himself, and became aware of his own sin—but not of how much he had hurt his father—he returned. Still thinking only of himself and his own needs, he rehearses how he will ask his father to receive him and make him an employee. But his father doesn't even let him finish his little rehearsed speech. He embraces the son and holds him to himself. He has a robe and ring brought, restoring him as son and heir. He kills the fattened calf as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. He neither demands nor wants an apology, nor does he permit any justification or even self-denigration on the part of his son. Rather, he forgives his son from the abundance of his love, casting away any resentment or bitterness, and accepts him for who he is—his beloved son.

This is how God forgives us! So we must forgive each other and be reconciled.

Also the crucifixion of Jesus Luke 23 VS 34 ..... Jesus said father forgive them for they don't know what they are doing : despite the fact that Jesus was mocked, they gave him wine vinegar , they told him to save himself he still forgave them

When I gained admission i was living with a friend because I had problems with accommodation. So one day I travelled when I came back I didn't see my food stuffs again, I asked my roommate she denied he didn't see any food. I was angry but later found out she and her boyfriend packed my food. After some months she came to apologize I forgave her. It wasn't easy for me but I just have to forgive her. So as a child of God, we must forgive others of their sins so that God will forgive us of our sins.

If you don't forgive don't expect God to forgive you. When you keep malice with people you wouldn't be able to connect yourself with God. The best thing is to forgive and let it go.

Now I will be talking on reconciliation and forgiveness.

Question: How are reconciliation and forgiveness related?

Fr. Jonah: Reconciliation presupposes forgiveness. If we forgive someone, we need to be open

to reconciliation, if possible. Reconciliation is forgiveness in action—the actual restoration of the interpersonal bond between two people, in mutual acceptance of each other for who each one is.

Forgiveness and reconciliation can lead to a stronger bond than previously existed. Each time an offense occurs, we can learn more about both the other and ourselves. This can lead to a deeper knowledge and understanding of each by the other, and thus can also lead to a more authentic bond of intimacy.

Reconciliation should always be the goal.

Sometimes we feel unable to reconcile—to put forgiveness into our actions and restore a relationship. If the person has severely abused us or our trust, it may not be wise to do so. Or perhaps the person is gone or dead. We can still forgive them, pray for them, and accept them—if only at a distance. We need to look at what is in ourselves that prevents us from reconciling—some fear or expectation of the other. But it is crucial to remember that forgiveness is only fulfilled in reconciliation.

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The arts of forgiveness

**Forgive yourself:** forgiveness is healthy. It's so important that the forgiveness starts with you first.

You must forgive yourself for whatever mistakes you must have made in the past, you must forgive yourself for all the hurtful ways you vented your anger on your offenders, you must forgive yourself for all the thousand words you were unable to say to the people that hurt you, you must forgive yourself for being helpless in that moment when you could have been stronger..

You must accept that life is a learning process so you must make mistakes, get hurt, learn from

them and move on. Self-loathing nor bitterness will not revoke the hands of time but you can definitely look beyond the disappointments that followed such hurts and see the blessings or the opportunities that lie within. It just might be a blessing in disguise. You must forgive yourself so you can be able to forgive the person/people that hurt you.

**Seek reconciliation with the right manner of approach:** earnestly approach your offenders with a forgiving mindset. I know that you may feel that just forgiving the person/persons within your discretion is enough. The truth is, it's not enough because the anger and the bitterness may spring up again at the glimpse of that person(s). Their presence may cause you discomfort or even worst thoughts. So, you have to meet them for reconciliation. I recommend that you take a step further by having a peace talk with such persons(s). Sincerely, with an open heart tell the person(s) how he/she had wronged you, how it affected you and made you feel about the person(s). It's good that you should use constructive words instead of violent and insulting words while you are at this so that you won't end up creating more hurts. Hence, a fruitful reconciliation.

**Note:** In the process of reconciliation, you may think that you are the only one hurting but you will be surprised to find out how you may have hurt someone else also. This is why reconciliation is good.

**Hold on to the future and let that be your focus:** liberate yourself from the bondage of what should have been in the past or what shouldn't have. Dwelling in the past will only drag you backwards, after forgiving yourself and others it's a step in the right direction that you must move on, focus on how to minimize the effects of the hurts. I call it damage control. You must not end up as a bag of rubbish just because you were hurt.

**Be positive:** let go of the doubts, pessimism and the fear of the unknown. Just because you lost/failed in winning with people, the people you never expected to hurt you. Put all that in the past because that's where all that baggage ought to be. The past truly. You shouldn't give up on relating with people and yourself because you are afraid of getting hurt again. See such situations in life as a test for every level in life. Keep an open mind and let positivity be your watch word when dealing with people that come your way in life, develop a charming personality, be confident in and out (but not proud or insulting). Remember, just as a law in Physics says "like poles attract like poles", so is it with humans, "positive energy attracts positive energy". Let go of all that negativity now.

**Surround yourself with good and kind-hearted people:** this is self-explanatory. Need I say more! Try and get out of that downcast mood, show an approval and gratitude by welcoming those people who check up on you during these darkest moments of your life, dress up and go out on a date with them so you can cheer up. Leave your door open and accept those people who truly can relate with what you are going through. To be honest, most times it's only someone who has been through the same hurtful situations as you that may be able to offer you soothing words of comfort, sympathy and empathy. Such person(s) could be your best friend, a co-worker,

family members or even members of a support forum. Don't shut out people who stretch forth a hand of love to you during this phase of life. Stop grieving now and if you must grieve, grieve with your loved ones.

**Read inspirational books:** Seek inspirations in the word of God, books, and TED talks. Never underestimate these sources of inspirations, they are true solace to a dispirited soul and to a broken heart. Receive them with an open heart, the light you are searching for, the answers to the questions which are flooding your mind, and the consolations that you need to forgive and move on can be found in them.

**Seek professional counseling:** Usually people are not willing to open up about what they might be going through. Sometimes it's not because they wouldn't love to open up but they are afraid that people will not understand them. It's necessary that when you have tried other options and see no positive results please speak to someone you can trust; a professional therapist and a religious authority for counseling.

I hope this helps you in some way

### Forgiving Others - **Direction from God**

Forgiving others may seem to be a choice, and in one sense it is a choice, but God has been very clear about forgiveness. He has given us specific direction in numerous Scriptures, all of which can be summed up in just one word -- forgive! God's Word says, "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins" (Mark 11:25). "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:37). God is saying that it is in our own best interest to forgive! He is not talking about what is in the best interest of the person who needs to be forgiven. We are the ones who God is trying to protect. We are the ones who receive the most benefit from forgiveness, not the other person. A spirit of unforgiveness complicates and compromises our daily walk with God. Forgiving others releases us from anger and allows us to receive the healing we need. The whole reason God has given us specific direction is because He does not want anything to stand between us and Him. God's love for us is beyond our comprehension. Forgiving others spares us from the consequences of living out of an unforgiving heart. Forgiving others does not carry with it a single decision that we need to ponder. God has not qualified one sin as being more grievous to Him than another and He has not qualified one sin committed against us as warranting forgiveness and another not. For example, God is not saying, "If a person lies to you or steals from you, you should forgive him, but if they abuse you or harm your child, you can hold them in unforgiveness." He is saying to forgive everyone, always, and do it immediately.

## Forgiving Others - **The Divine Example**

We have a divine example for forgiving others! God knew that man needed forgiveness, so He sent His Son Jesus to deliver all of mankind from the eternal consequences of their sins (1 John 4:9-10). Colossians 3:13 says, "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Jesus not only had the power to forgive, but to grant us the ability to forgive others just as we have been forgiven.

In conclusion: live as those made in Christ Col 3vs 13...if you have the spirit of love you should forgive ...bear with each other and forgive one another ..if any of you has grievance against someone forgive as the lord forgave you .