

## **Prayers for Healing of Painful Memories**

**T**he key to healing of painful memories is forgiveness — forgiveness of others, self and God. Forgiveness is an act of the will not a feeling. We may not feel like forgiving at all. But we can desire to forgive because we believe this will bring us healing. We can choose to forgive others whether or not we ever see them again. Forgiveness does not mean we have to become friends with that person. It is important to ask God to bless those whom we forgive in whatever way they need it, even if they are deceased. This prayer on our part helps take the puss out of our wounds.

**A**nother aspect of this healing process is to choose to forgive ourselves for what we have done as well as for any negligence. Since God loves and forgives us all the time, we need courage to forgive ourselves as God does. What this does is remove the guilt and shame associated with our sins and failures.

**L**astly we need to forgive God for the trials and sufferings that have come our way over which we have no control. It may be something from the distant past or a current situation, e.g. sickness, loss of a job, death of a loved one. As we let go of anger toward God, we learn to accept what we cannot change. In the process we trust that God's love for us will make things turn out for our good, and for the good of those we love.

**T**he forgiveness we chose to give in each of these areas is unconditional. There are no strings attached. It does not matter whether the other people are repentant or not. We do not need to approach anyone unless God shows us to do so. We are doing the right thing for the right reason so that we can be free of the burden of anger, resentment or vengeance.

**A**fter we choose to forgive, we should pray God's blessing upon the person(s) according to their need. Then ask God to remove the pain associated with those memories. Over a period of time we will experience more peace, and this will be a sign that healing has taken place.

### **Procedure**

**W**hen you pray for healing of painful memories, place yourself in a quiet setting with no distractions. You will use faith imagination, that is, you will imagine Jesus being with you in the events of the past. Rest your head on his shoulder or hold his hand. See Jesus looking lovingly upon you and the other people involved at each of the events you will consider. It is best to start from your earliest memories and move forward to the present. Linger at each memory for a few moments. Acknowledge your anger, fear, resentment and guilt. See Jesus granting love and forgiveness to the persons or groups involved. Respond with the appropriate forgiveness on your part. Pray for God to bless the persons who have caused the pain. Then ask God to heal this painful memory so that it does not bother you any more. When the memory tries to bother you in the future, push it out of your mind and refuse to dwell on it. Send it right to Jesus. The following prayers may help you in the healing process.

**Prayer to Forgive Others**

**J**esus, I am sorry for all my sins. I thank you for loving me and for forgiving me of all the sins of my life. I rely upon your abundant mercy each day. I believe you call me to forgive those who have hurt my loved ones or me. Your Word reminds me to "love your enemies and pray for your persecutors." So help me to give unconditional forgiveness for the hurts that are troubling me right now. I choose to forgive ... ..for what they said or did against me or my family. I pray that you will bless... ..in whatever way they need it. Please heal my mind and heart of this painful memory so that it does not trouble me anymore. I wish to be free of fear, anger and resentment toward ... ..Let your peace rest upon me and upon them.

**Prayer to Forgive Oneself**

**J**esus, I usually find it hard to forgive myself for my sins and failures. I know you love me and you forgive me whenever I repent of my sins, so I wish to forgive myself as you forgive me. I place this situation before you... ..Let your abundant love comfort me so that I can let go of the pain, sadness and hopelessness connected with it. Take away all guilt and shame for I wish to love myself with new freedom. I believe that you love me as I am not as I hope to become. When I am tempted to be angry, fearful and down on myself, remind me that I am precious in your sight, and that you have great plans for me.

**Prayer to Forgive God**

**A**ll loving God, it seems strange to think of forgiving you. I am the one in need of forgiveness. Yet it is hard for me to understand why so much evil happens in our world. I am sorry for judging you for the way you allow good people to suffer while the ungodly seem to prosper. Sometimes I am angry about my lot in life, and I quietly blame you. The problems and burdens I carry seem so unfair, and I don't want them anymore. Heal me of my anger toward you for what you allow to occur in my life and in the world around me. In particular I place this issue before you... ..Thank you for the good people and the many blessings that are part of my life despite the turmoil I feel. Deepen my faith that you bring good out of all my sufferings. I choose to believe that for those who love God all things work together unto good according to your purpose. I trust in your plan for my life.

**Serenity Prayer:** God, grant me serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.