

# Receiving and Distributing Forgiveness

**Step Nine - We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**

*When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners. Now, no one is likely to die for a good person, though someone might be willing to die for a person who is especially good. But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

(Romans 5)

While we were still living a helpless and messed up life, God came to us to speak healing and peace. He continues to make a way of peace for us through the cross of Jesus. He says, "I forgive you. Will you now receive that forgiveness? Will you make amends for your part in the breakdown of relationships you experience in your life?" Will you forgive yourself? Will you forgive your brother/sister?

We all suffer brokenness within ourselves, in our relationship with God, and in our relationships with others. Brokenness tends to weigh us down and can easily lead us back into our addictions and unhealthy dependencies. Much of recovery and a healthy life involves repairing the brokenness in our lives. This requires that we make peace with God, within ourselves, and with others whom we've alienated. Unresolved issues in relationships can disable us from being at peace with God and with ourselves. Jesus taught us:

*"So if you are standing before the altar in the Temple, offering a sacrifice to God, and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there beside the altar. Go and be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God." (Matthew 18)*

*If someone says, "I love God," but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we have not seen? And God himself has commanded that we must love not only him but our Christian brothers and sisters, too." (1 John 4)*

Once we go through the process of making amends, we must keep our minds and hearts open to anyone we may have overlooked. God will often remind us of relationships that need attention. When these come to mind, we should stop everything and go to those we've offended, seeking to repair the damage.

Making direct amends brings peace - with ourselves, others, and God.

## Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. What faces come to mind as I think about broken relationships?
2. To whom do I need to ask forgiveness? God? Myself? Family? Friends? Former colleagues?
3. What part did I play in all that?
4. On what basis can I ask others to forgive me?
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