



## **FORGIVEN TO FORGIVE SERIES**

### **EMOTIONAL FORGIVENESS – MODULE 7 STUDENT HANDOUT**

C and H: Commit and Hold On

#### **Session Aim**

To help you make a clear commitment to the forgiveness you have offered, and to learn how to hold on to that forgiveness when painful memories, emotions, or temptations to bitterness return.

#### **Key Scriptures (KJV)**

(Colossians 3:13)

“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”

(Ephesians 4:31–32)

“Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:

And be ye kind one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

(1 Peter 2:23)

“Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:”

(Philippians 4:8)

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report: if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”

(Hebrews 12:15)

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;”

(Romans 12:21)

“Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.”

#### **1. Where We Are in the REACH Process**

So far, we have worked through:



R – Recall the hurt

You remembered the hurt honestly in the presence of God.

E – Empathize with the offender

You began to see the offender as a broken human being, without excusing sin.

A – Offer the Altruistic gift of forgiveness

You offered forgiveness as a gift, not because the offender deserved it, but because you have received mercy from God.

Now we come to:

C – Commit to the forgiveness

H – Hold on to the forgiveness

These final steps are important because forgiveness is not only a moment. It must be guarded, remembered, and lived out over time.

Group questions:

1. Which earlier step of REACH has been most difficult for you so far: Recall, Empathize, or Altruistic gift? Why?
2. Why do you think a person might forgive sincerely one day, but struggle again later?

## **2. C – What Does “Commit” Mean?**

Commit means:

- Making your forgiveness decision clear before God.
- Giving that decision a definite form.
- Creating something you can return to when emotions rise again.

A simple definition:

- “To commit is to mark the moment when I have chosen, before God, to forgive.”

This matters because memory and emotion can be unstable. There may be days when you feel peaceful, and other days when pain returns sharply. A clear commitment helps you say:

- “I know what I chose before God.”
- “I do not have to reopen the case every time I feel hurt again.”
- “I can return to my commitment and ask God to help my heart catch up.”

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Group questions:

1. Why might it help to have a specific moment or statement of forgiveness?
2. What could happen if forgiveness remains vague and undefined?

### 3. Ways to Commit to Forgiveness

You can commit to forgiveness privately or with trusted support.

Possible ways include:

1. Write a forgiveness statement  
Example:  
“Before God, I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_. I release my right to revenge and place this matter in the hands of the righteous Judge.”
2. Pray the forgiveness out loud  
Example:  
“Lord Jesus, because You have forgiven me, I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_. I commit this decision to You.”
3. Tell a trusted mature believer  
This is not gossip. It is accountability. You might say:  
“I have chosen before God to forgive someone. Please pray that I will hold on to that forgiveness.”
4. Write a letter you do not send  
This can help you express the decision clearly without creating unnecessary risk or drama.
5. Mark the date in a journal or Bible  
This helps you remember: “On this day, I committed this forgiveness to God.”

#### **Important:**

- You do not need to tell the offender in every case.
- If the person is unsafe, manipulative, abusive, or likely to misuse your words, it may be wiser to commit your forgiveness privately before God.

Group questions:

1. Which method of commitment would be most helpful for you: writing, praying, sharing with a trusted believer, or marking a date?
2. Why might it sometimes be unwise to tell the offender directly?

### 4. Commitment Does Not Mean Everything Is Finished Emotionally



This is very important:

Committing to forgiveness does not mean:

- You will never feel pain again.
- You will never remember what happened.
- You will immediately trust the person again.
- The relationship is automatically restored.
- The offender is free from accountability.

Commitment means:

- You have chosen not to seek personal revenge.
- You have placed the matter in God's hands.
- You are choosing the path of mercy instead of bitterness.
- You are asking God to continue healing your emotions.

Forgiveness is real even when healing is still in progress.

Group questions:

1. Have you ever thought, "If I still feel pain, maybe I did not really forgive"?
2. How does it help to know that forgiveness can be real while healing is still ongoing?

## **5. H – What Does “Hold On” Mean?**

Hold on means:

- Continuing to stand by your forgiveness commitment when old feelings return.
- Refusing to let painful memories pull you back into revenge, bitterness, or contempt.
- Reaffirming your decision before God when necessary.

A simple definition:

- “To hold on is to keep choosing forgiveness when the memory comes back.”

Pain returning does not automatically mean unforgiveness has returned.

Sometimes pain returns because:

- The wound is still healing.
- Something triggered the memory.
- The offender repeated similar behaviour.

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- You are grieving another layer of what was lost.

In those moments, you do not need to panic. You return to God and say:

“Lord, I have forgiven. My emotions are stirred again. Help me hold on to the forgiveness I have committed to You.”

Group questions:

1. What kinds of things usually trigger old hurt for you?
2. How can you tell the difference between pain returning and revenge returning?

## **6. Holding On When the Mind Starts Replaying the Hurt**

A major challenge in holding on is rumination: replaying the offence over and over in the mind.

Rumination often says:

- “Look again at how wrong they were.”
- “Imagine what you should have said.”
- “Think about how they need to suffer.”
- “You were foolish to forgive.”

Philippians 4:8 gives a different path:

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“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report...”

This does not mean pretending the offence was good. It means refusing to let your mind become a courtroom where the same case is retried every day.

Practical replacement:

- Instead of rehearsing the offence, rehearse your commitment.
- Instead of imagining revenge, pray for strength and wisdom.
- Instead of feeding bitterness, speak the truth: “God is Judge. I have chosen forgiveness.”

Group questions:

1. What is the difference between remembering something honestly and replaying it bitterly?



2. What phrase or Scripture could you repeat when your mind starts rehearsing the offence?

## **7. Holding On When Feelings Contradict Your Commitment**

Some days, you may feel:

- Angry again
- Sad again
- Betrayed again
- Humiliated again
- Tempted to take back your forgiveness

Feelings are real, but they are not always final authority.

You can say:

- “This feeling is real, but it does not have to rule me.”
- “I am hurting, but I will not return to revenge.”
- “I feel anger, but I will not let bitterness take root.”
- “I bring this feeling to God again.”

(Ephesians 4:31–32) reminds us that bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, and malice must be put away, while kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness must be cultivated.

Holding on means letting God repeatedly bring your emotions back under His lordship.

Group questions:

1. Which feeling most often challenges your forgiveness: anger, sadness, shame, fear, or something else?
2. What would it look like to bring that feeling under God’s rule rather than letting it rule you?

## **8. Guarding Against the Root of Bitterness**

(Hebrews 12:15)

“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;”

Bitterness often begins underground before it becomes visible.

Signs bitterness may be growing:



- You enjoy hearing bad news about the person.
- You secretly hope they fail.
- You retell the story in ways that make you angrier each time.
- You become harsh toward people who remind you of them.
- You resist every prompting of God to pray, release, or soften.

Holding on to forgiveness requires vigilance.

Ask yourself:

- “Is this memory producing prayer or poison?”
- “Am I seeking wisdom, or feeding resentment?”
- “Am I protecting my heart, or hardening it?”

Group questions:

1. Which sign of bitterness is easiest to overlook?
2. Why does Hebrews warn that bitterness can defile many, not just the person who carries it?

## **9. Holding On Does Not Mean Removing Boundaries**

Forgiveness and boundaries can exist together.

You can forgive and still:

- Keep distance from an unsafe person.
- Report wrongdoing where necessary.
- Require accountability before trust is restored.
- Refuse to return to abusive or manipulative dynamics.
- Seek pastoral, counselling, or legal help if needed.

Holding on to forgiveness does not mean:

- Allowing repeated harm.
- Pretending danger is safe.
- Confusing forgiveness with reconciliation.
- Silencing truth to keep peace.

Romans 12:18 says:

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“If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.”

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Notice:

- “If it be possible”
- “As much as lieth in you”

Peace requires wisdom. Some relationships cannot be restored safely unless there is repentance, fruit, accountability, and time.

Group questions:

1. Why is it important to separate forgiveness from automatic reconciliation?
2. What healthy boundary might a forgiving person still need to keep?

## 10. A Practical Holding-On Plan

Create a simple plan for when painful feelings return.

1. Pause  
Do not immediately text, call, post, confront, or vent.
2. Pray  
“Lord, my pain has been stirred again. Help me respond in Your Spirit, not my flesh.”
3. Re-read your commitment  
Return to the forgiveness statement you wrote.
4. Name the trigger  
“What stirred this up today?”
5. Reject revenge  
Say clearly: “I will not seek payback. I leave vengeance to God.”
6. Choose one godly action  
This may be:
  - Praying quietly
  - Seeking counsel
  - Taking space
  - Setting a boundary
  - Doing something constructive
  - Refusing to spread the story unnecessarily
7. Ask for fresh grace  
“Lord, help my emotions come back into agreement with Your will.”

Group questions:

1. Which step in this plan would help you most when emotions return?

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2. What is one ungodly reaction you need to avoid when your pain is triggered?

### 11. Personal Reflection With God

Take a few quiet minutes to answer honestly.

1. “Lord, the person or situation I need to commit to forgiveness is:”

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2. “The offence I am committing to You is:”

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3. “The emotions that may make it hard to hold on are:”

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4. “The triggers I need to watch for are:”

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5. Write your forgiveness commitment:

“Before You, Lord Jesus, I choose to forgive \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_.

I release my right to personal revenge.

I place this matter into Your hands as the righteous Judge.

When the pain returns, help me hold on to this forgiveness and keep my heart free from bitterness.”

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### 12. Memory Verse and Practice for the Week

Memory verse:

(1 Peter 2:23)

“Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:”

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Suggested practice:

- This week, write a forgiveness commitment statement before God.
- Keep it in your Bible, journal, or phone notes.
- When the hurt returns, read it again and pray:  
“Lord, I hold on to the forgiveness I have committed to You. Heal what still hurts. Guard me from bitterness.”

Optional:

- Share with a trusted mature believer:  
“I have committed a forgiveness decision before God. Please pray that I will hold on when old feelings return.”

This module helps you move from a single act of forgiveness into a sustained walk of forgiveness. You are not pretending pain never returns. You are learning to bring returning pain back under the lordship of Jesus Christ, trusting the righteous Judge and guarding your heart from bitterness.