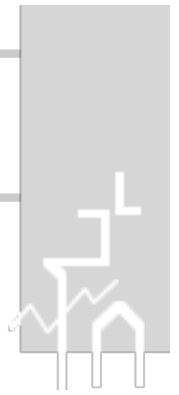


# ***TOWARD FORGIVENESS***

## ***THE OFFENDED'S WORK***



“*Forgive*” comes  
from the Hebrew, *salah* -- God's removing sin from the people  
from the Greek, *aphiemi*, “*to leave off, release*”  
(to release what blocks a relationship with God)

### **To prepare for forgiving:**

- (1) **Acknowledge** the situation  
as an unchangeable piece of the past  
Remember "forgive and forget" is the formula for denial,  
which makes painful events more likely to happen again.  
Tell the story many times in many ways.
- (2) **Grieve**, to discover and honor what was lost
- (3) **Change**, by giving oneself permission:
  - to feel, especially the anger and passion;  
respecting that anger can be useful on the path to justice
  - to take one's time to heal
  - to get support to explore the hurt and move on towards wholeness
  - to honestly reflect on one's strengths, boundaries and needs
- (4) **Practice appropriate use of power (Kyros):**  
Go beyond thinking/feeling and express oneself in *action*,  
even if symbolic.  
*Only if appropriate*, confront the behavior and/or report to authorities.

**Then through God's grace, one may experience "release,"**  
including forgiveness for one's separation from God  
and forgiveness for the offender.

Forgiveness *of the offender* is not exoneration;  
the offender must still be held accountable for his or her actions.  
Forgiveness does not require trusting the *offender* whose behavior may not have changed.

***“Reconcile” means “to settle, to make content”***

**If** the offender has completed his or her process toward receiving forgiveness,  
it may *now* be possible to **reconcile** with him or her.  
To rush reconciliation before *both* the offended and the offender have completed their inner work is  
CHEAP GRACE and dangerous!  
Reconciliation with *God* is the reconciliation necessary for healing.