

Day 19

God, Help Me!

Philippians 4:10-13

I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

Ican't forgive Tom. I hate him. I want him to pay! God, help me!" Amy broke down and cried. She had experienced a lifetime of pain and betrayal. Tom had also wounded other family members that Amy loved. How could she forgive when she wanted him dead?

Amy was right. On our own, we cannot do what God calls us to do. Inner strength, self-help, personal conviction—all these fail us because we are sinners. Our natural will works against God's will. Thus, we cannot make peace as the Bible teaches.

Jesus lived the perfect life we could not live. He suffered the brutal punishment we could not endure. He died for the sins of the whole world. We can do nothing to pay for our sinful nature or actual sins. We have received the blessings of God's forgiveness only because of Christ's atoning sacrifice.

This same Lord Jesus promises to be with us in all our trials. He knows that on our own we cannot do that to which he calls us.

Amy's prayer "God, help me" was appropriate. In these words, she confessed her weakness and inability to live as God's child on her own merit. She realized that God forgave her sins, although they were as condemning as Tom's in God's eyes. God filled her with a peace that surpasses understanding. With Jesus' help she forgave the one who had hurt her so deeply.

Holy God, help me. I am powerless on my own to live as you teach. Grant me peace that comes from the confidence that you forgive me. Send your Holy Spirit, that I may live, proclaim, and cultivate reconciliation. I pray this for Jesus' sake. Amen.

*Adapted from Forgiven to Forgive - 6 Weeks of Daily Devotions
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Write or type your answers. Writing your answers helps you to meditate more deeply on the question, organize your thoughts, and provide a visible way for you to review and reflect on how this devotion applies to your specific situation.

1. Thinking about your conflict, in what ways do you feel incapable or unwilling to deal with this situation in a God-honoring way?
2. On whose strength have you been depending for responding in a Christ-like way?
3. In Ephesians 2:10, God teaches: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (ESV). Identify some of the good works that God desires you do in this current conflict.
4. Write a prayer of confession for leaning on your own strength instead of God's. Then, thanking God for His promises of forgiveness, ask Him to strengthen and equip you for the good work He planned in advance for you in this specific situation.