



Forgiveness—Granting It and Maintaining It*

The challenge to maintain biblical forgiveness will be waged in the minds of those who grant forgiveness. The three major tests in this regard are **Memory, Reminder, and Imagination (M.R.I.)**

Memories related to forgiven sins can resurface and be significant hindrances for believers to maintain biblical forgiveness. These memories often focus on painful situations that were accompanied by overwhelming emotions.

Reminders of past sins can be triggered by situations in everyday life, and their appearances are often unexpected.

To minimize unexpected reminders of past sins, a believer can eliminate some of them in advance. For example, any reminders of past sin(s) such as clothing, memorabilia, pictures, letters, or gifts should be discarded. Any locations, events, stories, or songs that are associated with past sinfulness should be avoided. Some reminders of past sins, however, are out of a believer's control and can surface without notice.

Imagination often deals with *unknown* or *imagined* possible sin(s) that are mentally linked to *known* forgiven sins. Imagination of this type can create disturbing emotions.

A believer in Christ should immediately respond to any **M.R.I.** test by:

- praying for all persons, including one's self, who are impacted by known forgiven sin(s)
- giving thanks for personal salvation and for the Lord's continuing help to grow in Christ
- rejoicing that every test/temptation is common and can be overcome by relying on the Lord and His Word
- trusting in the Lord instead of yielding to anxiety and worry
- redirecting thoughts from anxiety to matters that bring honor to the Lord
- moving one's attention away from sinful situations and back to on-going growth in Christ

These responses to **M.R.I.** challenges are indicated in the following verses, any of which can be memorized. See [The Easy Way to Memorize Scripture](#).

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Philippians 1:6, And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:13, No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Philippians 4:6-8, do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5, For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ.

Romans 12:2, Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Philippians 3:12-14, Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

For encouragement, see:

[God is Faithful](#)

[Don't Lose Heart](#)

[Prayer: A Viable Option or an Absolute Necessity?](#)

[A Prayer Pattern to Help Structure Your Life](#)

[God's Purposes in His Children's Trials](#)

*Excerpted from [Forgiveness: The Impossible Possibility](#)