International Spiritual Awakening Ministries
For Immediate Release

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I.R.F.R. Week: THE FORGIVENESS PROCESSES FOR CHILDREN, TEENS, & EVEN ADULTS
“Holding onto Resentment or Anger from Childhood Could Lead to Bullies, Suicides, and/or Unhappy Adults”

October 26, 2014 - Princeton, NJ- Who are teaching children and teens about forgiveness? The parents/guardians? The schools? The church? This is the question that Activist/Prophet Letitia Peters discussed on the October 25, 2014 Blog Talk Radio Show as she continued International Repentance, Forgiveness, & Reconciliation (I.R.F.R.) Week. The archived show can be obtained by downloading it at www.BlogTalkRadio.com. Someone said, “Forgiveness is giving up the right to hate those who have hurt us.” Mark 11:25-26 (NKJV) states, “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.” It is a commandment that we must forgive others in order for God to forgive us. Many people do not realize that they are blocking their own blessings in their lives, because they failed to forgive those who have hurt them, persecute them or are adversaries to their soul.

She discussed the topic of parents and guardians teaching the children and teens about forgiveness, as well as, using biblical scriptures about forgiveness and using Jesus/Yeshua as a role model. She also discussed that parents, guardians or adults can used these forgiveness processes for themselves. Forgiveness is a process and it is about more than just saying “I am sorry”. Forgiveness brings freedom.

What is forgiveness?
Researchers who study forgiveness and its effects on our well-being and happiness are very specific about how they define forgiveness.

Psychologist Sonja Lyubomirsky calls forgiveness “a shift in thinking” toward someone who has wronged you, “such that your desire to harm that person has decreased and your desire to do him good (or to benefit your relationship) has increased.” Forgiveness, at a minimum, is a decision to let go of the desire for revenge and ill-will toward the person who wronged you. It may also include feelings of goodwill toward the other person. Forgiveness is also a natural resolution of the grief process, which is the necessary acknowledgment of pain and loss.

Researchers are very clear about what forgiveness is not:

Forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. Forgiveness is one person’ s sinner response to another’s perceived injustice. Reconciliation is two people coming together in mutual respect. Reconciliation requires both parties working together. Forgiveness is something that is entirely up to you. Although reconciliation may follow forgiveness, it is possible to forgive without re-establishing or continuing the relationship. The person you forgive may be deceased or no longer part of your life. You may also choose not to reconcile, perhaps because you have no reason to believe that a relationship with the other person is healthy for you.

Forgiveness is not forgetting. “Forgive and forget” seem to go together. However, the process of forgiving involves acknowledging to yourself the wrong that was done to you, reflecting on it, and deciding how you want to think about it. Focusing on forgetting a wrong might lead to denying or suppressing feelings about it, which is not the same as forgiveness. Forgiveness has taken place when you can remember the wrong that was done without feeling resentment or a desire to pursue revenge. Sometimes, after we get to this point, we may forget about some of the wrong people have done to us. But we don’t have to forget in order to forgive.

Forgiveness is not condoning or excusing. Forgiveness does not minimize, justify, or excuse the wrong that was done. Forgiveness also does not mean denying the harm and the feelings that the injustice produced. And forgiveness does not mean putting yourself in a position to be harmed again. You can forgive someone and still take healthy steps to protect yourself, including choosing not to reconcile.

Forgiveness is not justice. It is certainly easier to forgive someone who sincerely apologizes and makes amends. However, justice—which may include acknowledgment of the wrong, apologies, punishment, restitution, or compensation—is separate from forgiveness. You may pursue your rights for justice with or without forgiving someone. And if justice is denied, you can still choose whether or not to forgive.

Forgiveness is a powerful choice you can make when it’s right for you that can lead to greater well-being and better relationships.

(Sources The How of Happiness, by Sonja Lyubomirsky)
Forgiveness Process for Children

According to Maureen Healy, a child development expert who focuses on children's emotional health and parenting. Her organization is called Growing Happy Kids (www.growinghappykids.com). In her article, “Are you really teaching your kids how to forgive?” she states, “Forgiveness doesn't merely occur when a little kid says, "I am sorry" for hitting you in the head with a football. You actually need to consciously go through a process of forgiving so you don't hold any resentment or anger. Think about it this way. Were you ever teased in school? What was his or her name? I remember David Smith* who made fun of me out the bus window in 1986 - it's as clear as day. Fortunately, I don't feel any emotion around this but if I did then some forgiveness work would be needed. The same is true of kids. Terry stole her sister's bathing suit, broke one of the straps, and infuriated her sister. Terry said, "I am sorry" and her sister was theoretically supposed to just forgive. But what again does that mean? It means a whole lot more than a blanket "I am sorry" that supposed to magically sweep clean the situation. I have found that parents that teach their kids how to "really forgive" set them up to succeed and create a foundation of strength as well as self-love.

Here are 5 Simple Steps for Actual Forgiveness:
1. Acknowledge Acknowledge What Happened
2. Experience Experience Your Feelings
3. Communicate Say you want to forgive
4. Forgive State you don't want to carry the anger anymore (or frustration, guilt, resentment)

Each of these steps must be felt from the heart but acted upon sequentially so a child learns how to truly forgive another child (parent, sister, and friend). It will free their emotional body from unresolved grief, pain, sadness and hurt. And it would look like this, Jessie states: Terry, you stole my bathing suit and broke it. My feelings are hurt. This stinks. I want to forgive you. Please don’t take my things without asking. I don't want to fight. I love you. Forgiveness is an emotional process of clearing past hurts so you can be free to live your happiest life as an adult or child. Forgiveness isn't exclusively about becoming emotionally free. It is a mindset that when cultivated can help you see yourself as part of a larger community of people that are perfectly imperfect - each of us has needed to forgive someone, and also be forgiven so the practice goes both ways.

One mother, Margaret, told me that she sits with her kids nightly and says "Is there anyone who we are holding outside of our hearts?" so the topic of forgiveness is put on the table and used to clear any daily hurts.”

Using the Holy Bible to Teach about Forgiveness

The Holy Bible should be the guide when teaching about forgiveness. Here are several Bible Verses to use to teach about forgiveness:

- **This is a commandment that your heavenly father will not forgive you, if you don’t forgive others as stated in Matthew 6:14-15**

  "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions” (Matthew 6:14-15).

- **Having hatred or wrath, in your heart for someone is a sin and you will not go to heaven as stated in Galatians 5:19-22**

  “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and suchlike; of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Galatians 5:19-22).

**Other sin-related scriptures:**

Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin (James 4:17).

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Revelation 21:8).

Jesus said, “of sin, because they believe not on me” (John 16:9).

- **Do not sin or let the sun go down on your wrath nor give place to the devil as stated in Ephesians 4:26-27**

  “Be angry and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil” (Ephesians 5:26-27).
Forgiveness brings freedom; you should ask for forgiveness and confess your sins to be cleanse of all unrighteousness as stated in 1 John 1:9
“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

The Blood of Jesus/Yeshua will cleanse you of all sin as stated in 1 John 1:7
“We have fellowship one with another & the blood of Jesus Christ/Yeshua his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1John 1:7).

How many times should you forgive?
Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven” (Matthew 18:21-22).

How to Treat Your Enemies
"But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head” (Romans 12:20).

Love, Bless, and Pray for Your Enemies
“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them, which despitefully use you , and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).

Using Jesus/Yeshua as a Role Model for Forgiveness when He was Crucified on the Cross
And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” And they cast lots, dividing up His garments among themselves (Luke 23:33-34).

Is Teasing and Bullying due to Unforgiveness?
Teasing and Bullying are contributing to over 4,000 deaths a year. Why? Is it due to unforgiveness? On the September 30, 2012 show, the special guest was author of “That’s Not My Name” and President of Tease Free Kids, Anita Fendall (www.TeaseFreeKids.com) as she discussed how to handle bullying and how to help someone who is being bullied. She discussed the progression of bullying from childhood and how to stop it before it is out of control. Her archived show is at <a>http://www.BlogTalkRadio.com/isam/2012/10/01/heal-our-nations</a>.

In Dr. Ed Murphy’s book, “The Handbook of Spiritual Warfare” states, “Those who hurt you have their own guilt, but it is guilt before God, not before you. You are not responsible for their actions. You are only responsible for your reactions to their actions. People are always held responsible for their sins, even sins provoked by the unjust actions of others. Some people have become so accustomed to their self-pity, anger, feelings of inferiority, rejection; they really don’t want to change. For many, it has become an excuse for other sins, which they do not want to abandon. When you forgive and can really pray for the salvation and transformation of those who have hurt you most, you are on the way to healing. God moves in answer to the prayers of His saints.”

Examples of Three Other Forgiveness Processes:
Dr.Everett Worthington, a psychologist who has researched forgiveness for decades, has developed a five-step process called REACH:
R is for Recall. Recall the events and the hurt as accurately and objectively as you can.
E is for Empathize. Try to understand what happened from the point of view of the person who wronged you.
A is for the Altruistic gift of forgiveness. Recall a time that you hurt someone else and were forgiven. And offer this gift to the person who wronged you.
C is for Committing yourself to forgive publicly. Write a letter of forgiveness (whether you send it or not), write in a journal, tell a trusted friend, or, if you can, tell the person who wronged you.
H is for Holding onto forgiveness. Forgiving is not forgetting. Memories of the wrong and feelings will come up. Remind yourself that you have made a choice to forgive.

Dr.Robert Enright suggests a four-phase process in Forgiveness is a Choice:
• Uncover your anger; honestly examine the unjust act and your feelings about it.
• Decide to forgive; be willing to turn your back on the past and look toward the future.
• Work on forgiveness; forgiving is a process that takes recommitment and concrete actions.
• Discovery and release; be open to discovering the meaning of suffering, the need for forgiveness, the fact that you are not alone, and a new purpose in life.

Dr. Sonja Lyubormirsky offers additional exercises in her book The How of Happiness:
• Appreciate being forgiven; reflect on a time when you were forgiven; or seek forgiveness for a wrong you have done
• Imagine forgiveness; imagine what you might say to the person and how you would feel
- Write a letter of forgiveness; not necessarily to send, but to write out what happened and how it affected you, what you wish the person had done, and end with a statement of understanding and forgiveness
- Write the other person’s apology letter; not necessarily to send, but imagine the explanation the person would give for her/his behavior and how she/he feels about the harm she/he has done

Forgiveness Prayer:
An example of a Forgiveness Prayer: Father in Jesus’/Yeshua’s name, Today, (talk about the incident & how you felt at the time; I feel angry, betray, hurt, or rejected) I forgive name of person/myself for such & such with all my heart, mind, and soul in Jesus’/Yeshua’s name. I confess and repent of the sins that I committed against You, Lord. I ask for Your forgiveness, Lord. I forgive those that I harmed me, as well as, those who harmed me in Jesus’/Yeshua’s name. Cleanse my heart, mind, and soul with the blood of Jesus/Yeshua from all unrighteousness & sin in Jesus’/Yeshua’s name. Lord, make my heart; pure in Jesus’/Yeshua’s name. You are such a merciful Lord that You remember my sin no more. Lord, I ask the Holy Ghost to help me to forget this incident. In Jesus’/Yeshua’s name, I loose the anointing of the blood of Jesus’/Yeshua and Yeshua’s glory to cover my mind, body, soul and surrounding my spirit in Jesus’/Yeshua’s name.
Thank you, Lord. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. Amen

Movies to Watch:
As We Forgive: The Story of Rwanda’s Redemption www.AsWeForgiveMovie.com. Rwandan Reconciliation
Survivors of the Genocide are Finding Ways to Forgive those that Killed their Loved Ones: (Cut and paste into browser) video.pbs.org/videoI1948689882
Grace, Amish way of Forgiving: You can download or buy the movie on various websites.
Heaven’s Rain produced &directed by Brooks Douglass
Heaven’s Rain is a powerful tool for starting meaningful conversations about family, faith, forgiveness, & policy reform. You can host a Heaven’s Rain showing. This movie could be integrated into prison ministries. Rev. Arthur Hallet, Director – Evangelism Explosion Prison Ministry said, “I was highly moved by the reflection of compassion, reality of emotions & depth of forgiveness portrayed in Heaven’s Rain. As a minister to prisoners, this movie will prove to be one of my greatest assets in our attempt to bring reconciliation to the victims & the victimizer. It is real life proof that no matter what the crime, there is potential for forgiveness, closure, and above all inner peace.”

1 Documentary:
Oprah and Lifeclass Teachers Live from Toronto: The Power of Forgiveness
<a>http://www.oprah.com/oprahs-lifeclass/webcast-landing.html</a>

Website for Kids:
Visit Carey Kinsolving’s website that inspires kids to know God and to know the Bible:www.kidstalkaboutGod.org.

Proverbs 22:6 states, “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” Like Catherine Ponder suggested, “the forgiving state of mind is a magnetic power for attracting good. I believe this is true. The more I have forgiven myself and others in my life - the more miracles, joy and happiness flowed in easily. And now isn't that what every parent wants? Kids that know how to be happier, more compassionate and forgiving of self and others so their best life just opens up in front of them with less struggle and more ease. I believe so.”

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