

# MINISTRY TOOL #12 – FOR BREAKING TIES

## The Forgiveness Cross

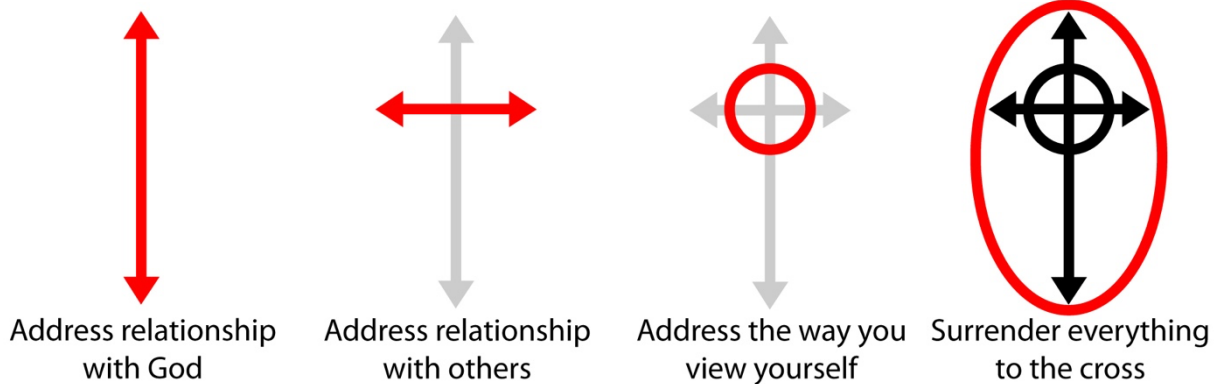
*Total forgiveness includes forgiving others, restoring relationship with God, and forgiving oneself.*



**Luke 10:27** – He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

### EXPLANATION:

The hurts we encounter often leave multidirectional wounds. Not only do we need to forgive the person who offended us, but we also need to address our relationships with the Lord and even ourselves. Then, we need to even surrender our attachment to the past.



**Address relationship with God.** This includes crucifying your bitterness, resentment, or unhealthy anger. It also includes forgiving God (not that God did anything wrong) and choosing to crucify any anger or resentment you’ve held against Him.

**Address relationship with others.** Forgive the person who offended you. If it is right and possible to reconcile, do so. Apologize for the things you need to apologize for, and/or bring loving rebuke for the things that were hurtful from the other person.

**Address the way you view yourself.** Forgive yourself for the role you played in the hurtful experience. Choose to believe that the “old you” is dead with Christ on the cross and the “new you” is raised with Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Surrender everything to the cross.** Not only have you crucified your sin, your bitterness, your resentment, your angry disposition, and even your view of yourself, but you can also consider the event itself to be dead and powerless over you.


## GOSPEL SUMMARY:

The forgiveness cross is a diagram that reminds us to (1) reconcile with God, (2) remove unhealthy barriers between us and people, (3) view ourselves rightly, and (4) consider even the event itself to be dead and powerless.


Galatians 6:14 says, “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” If the world is crucified to you, that means you can no longer access it or anything it has done to you. You can no longer use the past as an excuse for present behavior. And if you are crucified to the world, that means you are no longer accessible to it. Your past no longer has the power to touch you. Consider it all dead—a relic of the past that no longer impacts the future. You are a new creation.

## HOW TO:


You may find that you need to address the person’s relationship with God before they will be able to express forgiveness toward someone else. (See 1 John 4:19 and Luke 7:47.)

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- ❑ **Lead them to pray:** “Holy Spirit, was there anything I did in this situation that was sinful, inappropriate, or less than ideal?” Ask them to share anything that comes to mind.
  - ❑ **Declare God’s forgiveness** over the person in Jesus’ name.
  - ❑ **Ask the person** if they have been angry at God. Listen to their story. Follow the Holy Spirit in helping them put their resentment and anger on the cross. You may find another tool helpful here (like **Ministry Tool #7: The Father Ladder**).


Now, return to the issue at hand and the person or persons who need to be forgiven. Remind the ministry recipient that they’re powerless to truly forgive unless Jesus does it through them.

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- ❑ Lead the person in prayer, humbly asking the Lord for help.
  - ❑ **Have them pray:** “I offer to the cross all the anger, bitterness, and resentment I’ve held in my heart against [name].”
  - ❑ **Have them declare:** “With God’s help, I choose to forgive [name] for [offense].”

Now bring the person’s attention to their own role in the situation.

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- ❑ **Lead them to pray:** “I choose to forgive myself for [anything I mishandled or any way I sinned during or after this situation].” (Be as specific or as vague as seems relevant.)

Finally, offer the entire situation to the cross.

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- ❑ **Lead them to pray:** “In Jesus’ name, I consider this entire event to now be dead to me. It no longer has any authority over me, my relationships, or my future.”
  - ❑ **Continue:** “And I consider myself dead to this event. I will no longer allow my heart to revisit it as anything other than a testimony of God’s transformative power.”