

Strengths:

As I reflect on this assignment, I thought about one of the most hurtful and painful experience of my life and how God used others to help me start the process of forgiving the person. Once I found out about the circumstances of how my biological mother abandoned me at birth and left me at the hospital I was very angry and full of resentment. I remember watching the movie "The Antwone Fisher Story" for the first time and becoming so angry at the part when he confronts his biological mother and asks her why she never came back to get him and she did not say a word. I had a bat in my room at the time and I wanted to tear my room up but I knew my mother wouldn't understand and would be very alarmed, so I just beat my bed and cried silently. During a women's group at my church, I shared that I was adopted, the circumstances and how I was feeling about it. A women asked me if I ever thought that my biological mother left me because she loved me. God began to use those words to start the process of forgiveness. God also used a demonstration that a preacher showed during a conference in which he held a piece of paper on some ones back and told that person to walk wherever they wanted to go. In order to hold the paper against the person, he had to follow them and in turn be controlled by them. Once he decided to stop holding the "thing" against the person and let it go, he was no longer bound to the person and free to go where he wanted to go. God also used this demonstration to show me that although I never met my biological mother, I was bound to her because I was holding her decision against her. Through much prayer, I let it go and am no longer allowing what she did to control my emotions or decisions. I can honestly say if I were to meet her now in my life I can sit down and have a civil conversation oppose to before, wanting to taking a bat and smashing her head in. I allow forgiveness to be a gift of healing that I give myself.

I agree with David Stoop when he says that "Forgiveness, true forgiveness takes time. I feel that I have learned that truth. I now understand that just because we say the words I forgive you that forgiveness is not automatic. There is a process that we must go through. I think that the length and the intensity of the process depends on the offense, offender and the relationship, however it's something that I need to work through.

Weakness:

I also use Forgiveness is not valid if it is superficial as my weakness. Although I agree that forgiveness is a process and takes time, sometimes I have quickly said that I have forgiven someone but have not adequately worked through my feelings of anger, hurt, etc. As David Stoop says, my "forgiveness is incomplete." I think about times that I felt unsupported, misunderstood and not validated by my mom. This was very hurtful and still is, however I have pondered the questions that was posed from your last feedback which were, have I forgiven those who did not understand me enough and were my parents affirmed by their parents. The answer is no but this also helps me to recognize that I have not allowed myself to work through my feelings. I think the difference between how I can work through my hurt with my birth mother and my mom is the relationship. I don't have a vested relationship with my birth mother. I guess I have more expectations for my mom however, I realize she can't give something that she probably did not receive herself and was not taught. This challenges me to work through my feelings and let go of the "thing" that I'm holding against her so that I can be free and my forgiveness can be valid.

Canceling the debt is another weakness. Working through my feelings will also help me learn how to cancel the debt. There are still times that I hold the person in the "you owe me" position. Sometimes it's hard to feel toward the person as if the "sin" never occurred, however, when I think how Jesus canceled

my debt, it motivates me to ask the Holy Spirit to empower me to accept the person even though I may still feel the hurt and see the offense as wrong.