

What Brings Forgiveness: Reflections on Three Cases

Gu-Hwa Hong Yi*

【Abstract】

Forgiveness is a religious coping method that primarily benefits the injured person through transformation of emotions, cognitions, and behaviors toward the offender. The offense can be caused by self, others, God, or situation. Forgiveness is a process that leads to lessening the feelings of unforgiveness and the increase of positive regard for the offender. My clinical experiences along with research findings suggest some elements that facilitate forgiveness in therapy. As for therapists, forgiveness issues tend to be effectively dealt with by a therapist who is open to assess and work with a client's religious belief systems. Also, when clients have built trusting relationships with their therapists through enough number of sessions and exclusively talk about forgiveness in therapy, forgiveness issues are effectively dealt with in therapy. Using effective forgiveness interventions in therapy is also important to bring forgiveness, which in turn yields improved clinical outcomes. Core elements in effective forgiveness interventions include defining the forgiveness, recalling the hurt, building empathy, acknowledging own offenses, committing forgiveness, and overcoming unforgiveness. When a therapist employs effective interventions with sensitivity to each client's situation, forgiveness therapy can help clients improve their clinical symptoms as well as grow and mature in the midst of their sufferings.

Key words: forgiveness, therapy, elements that promote forgiveness in therapy, therapeutic outcomes of forgiveness, a religious coping method

• 논문 투고일: 2013년 10월 20일

• 논문 수정일: 2013년 11월 2일

• 게재 확정일: 2013년 11월 12일

* 합동신학대학원대학교

I. Introduction

Forgiveness is viewed as a fundamental value not only in Christianity but also in most major religions, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism.¹⁾ Especially in Christianity, the biblical teaching on forgiveness by Jesus is very clear(Matt. 18:21-22). However, whereas it is encouraged to exercise forgiveness as a basic value from religions, there are also objections and cautionary views about forgiveness.²⁾ They argue that exercising forgiveness can be against social justice or expressing anger and wishes for retaliation can be signs of self-respect. These views posit the necessity to examine forgiveness from different angles and to define forgiveness in order to avoid misunderstandings about forgiveness.

In addition, in reality, it is not easy for us to exercise forgiveness in our lives despite religious doctrines and teachings. We are easily hurt, but cannot easily forgive the offenders. Thus, if psychotherapy promote forgiveness, it may spiritually and psychologically benefit clients. Actually, researches found that forgiveness interventions brought more hope and religious and existential well-being and less anger, anxiety, depression, grief.³⁾ These research findings suggest that

-
- 1) Mark S. Rye et al., "Religious Perspectives on Forgiveness," in *Forgiveness: Theory, Research, and Practice*, eds., Michael E. McCullough, Keneeth I. Pargament, and Carl E. Thoresen (New York: The Guilford Press, 2000), 17-40.
 - 2) Sharon Lamb, "Introduction: Reasons to be Cautious about the Use of Forgiveness in Psychotherapy," in *Before Forgiving: Cautionary Views of Forgiveness in Psychotherapy*, eds., Sharon Lamb and Jeffrie G. Murphy (New York: Oxford Press, 2002), 3-14; Jerome Neu, "To Understand All Is to Forgive All-Or Is It?", in *Before Forgiving*, 17-38.
 - 3) Catherine E. Coyle and Robert D. Enright, "Forgiveness Intervention with Postabortion Men," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 65(1997): 1042-1046; Suzanne R. Freedman and Robert D. Enright, "Forgiveness as an Intervention Goal with Incest Survivors," *Journal of Consulting and Clinical*

examining which elements in therapy promote forgiveness, which in turn may yield positive outcomes for clients, may help therapists effectively deal with clients who are struggling with forgiveness issues.

My experience working with three Christian clients who showed resentment and anger toward God, self, and others allowed me to see how exercising forgiveness and promoting forgiveness in therapy can benefit the clients to improve their symptoms and grow towards maturity as Christians. After dealing with these three cases, I have also been able to see when clients have difficulties with forgiveness. When considering that therapy is processed in the relationship between a therapist and a client, effective forgiveness therapy may depend on each aspects of the therapist, client, and forgiveness interventions itself. That is, the kinds of attitude a therapist has in therapy toward dealing with forgiveness issues, the factors influencing a client, and the interventions a therapist uses may determine the effectiveness of forgiveness therapy. Thus, in what follows, after defining forgiveness, I will discuss which factors may lead to effective forgiveness therapy in terms of therapists, clients, and interventions, reflecting on my three clients.

II. Body

1. Forgiveness as a Religious Coping Method

As Pargament and Rye(1998) claim, forgiving is a method of coping

Psychology (1996): 983–992; Mark S. Rye and Kenneth I. Pargament, “Forgiveness and Romantic Relationships in College: Can It Heal the Wounded Heart?” *Journal of Clinical Psychology* 54(2002): 419–463.

and a religious value that posits important value-related questions.⁴⁾ However, despite religious endorsement, there are also objections and cautionary views about forgiveness. These objections and cautionary views about forgiveness remind us of the importance to define forgiveness and differentiate genuine forgiveness from similar concepts to correct misunderstandings about forgiveness that therapists and clients may have.

1) Forgiveness in Different Religions

Forgiveness is one of the central values in Christianity as a religious coping method. However, when we recognize that forgiveness is also an important religious coping method in other religions, we can utilize forgiveness in working with clients with various religions besides Christians. Even though each religion has a different justification and definition, forgiveness is important to most religions, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. According to scholars of each religious tradition, forgiveness is central to Christian and Jewish traditions. Forbearance and compassion, which represent forgiveness in Buddhism, are central to Buddhism. In Islam, receiving forgiveness from Allah is a fundamental concern, and interpersonal forgiveness is valued because Allah values forgiveness and forgiveness can repair relationships and promote peace. In Hinduism, forgiveness is equally as important to dharma as compassion, duty, patience, and other ethical concepts.⁵⁾

In Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, forgiveness is justified because

4) Kenneth I. Pargament and Mark S. Rye, "Forgiveness as a Method of Religious Coping," in *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research, Theological Perspectives*, ed., Everett L. Worthington, Jr. (Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press(1998), 59-78.

5) Rye et al., "Religious Perspectives on Forgiveness," 17-40.

humans are expected to imitate God, who is forgiving, and “people received forgiveness from God as a function of their willingness to forgive each other.”⁶⁾ In Buddhism, forgiveness is necessary to end suffering of self and others and to achieve enlightenment. In Hinduism, one should forgive if he or she chooses to follow the path of righteousness. In Buddhism and Hinduism, “unresolved issues such as anger will reappear in subsequent reincarnations through karma.”⁷⁾ Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism appear to encourage forgiveness irrespective of the offender’s repentance. Judaism defines rules for when a victim should forgive, that is, only after the offender has expressed repentance and has gone through the process of compensation. Although a victim may choose to forgive even if the offender has failed to go through the process of compensation, but this is discouraged, especially if the offense was severe. In Hinduism, some sacred Hindu stories illustrate divine forgiveness without contrition, and other stories show that repentance is an important prerequisite for receiving forgiveness.⁸⁾

As to whether forgiveness necessitates reconciliation, Jewish and Islamic scholars responded that reconciliation is not a requirement of forgiveness. The Buddhist scholar indicated that compassion and reconciliation are closely related, even though one can be compassionate in the absence of reconciliation. The Christian scholar responded that forgiveness must always allow for the possibility of reconciliation. The Hindu scholar indicated that there is no “rule of thumb” on this matter due to the diverse Hindu traditions.⁹⁾

6) Rye et al., “Religious Perspectives on Forgiveness,” 38.

7) Rye et al., “Religious Perspectives on Forgiveness,” 38.

8) Rye et al., “Religious Perspectives on Forgiveness,” 17-40.

9) Rye et al., “Religious Perspectives on Forgiveness,” 17-40.

Marty articulated forgiveness in Christianity. He claims that forgiveness is manifested in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit within the church community. According to Marty, divine forgiveness, mediated through humans, is one form of the love that should portray the full life in the community and beyond. Marty calls forgiveness an ethos, correlated with word “character.”¹⁰⁾ He defines God’s character as forgiving, in which He does not remember, forgets iniquity, wants to forgive, and is forgiving. He also argues for forgiveness as the ethos of Jesus in the Gospels illustrated in the stories and sayings of Jesus. He asserts that the Holy Spirit is connected with forgiveness in community and the church is the “called out” community of the forgiven and forgivers.¹¹⁾

2) Objections and Cautionary Views of Forgiveness

There are objections or cautionary views of forgiveness. For example, Sharon Lamb criticizes that the definition of forgiveness is different depending on theorists and it lacks consensus. She criticizes that forgiveness theorists use stage theories without defending stage progression as necessary or even the best way to go through the process of forgiving. She argues that forgiveness theorists neglect the positive effects of negative emotions such as resentment, vengefulness, and the anger and claims that she is not sure why anger must be treated and why it is bad for a person, pointing out that anger is not listed in the DSM-IV. She also criticizes that forgiveness theorists often neglect the context in which forgiveness occurs and that they advocate their views of unilateral forgiveness based on their

10) Martin E. Marty, “The Ethos of Christian Forgiveness,” in *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research, Theological Perspectives*, 15.

11) Marty, *The Ethos of Christian Forgiveness*, 9–28.

Christian biases.¹²⁾

Jerome Neu also argues that feeling anger may be “a condition of self-respect” when appropriate and failure to feel appropriate anger may be “a sign of insufficient concern for one’s rights and dignity, insufficient self-respect.”¹³⁾ He also argues that resentment has a moral claim, which is different from anger and annoyance.¹⁴⁾ Mona Gustafson Affinito also points out the lack of definition of forgiveness and reminds of the dangers of forgiveness interventions that fail to address the issue of justice and the potential forgiver’s right to anger and resentment. He presents a definition of forgiveness as “the decision to forgo the personal pursuit of punishment for the perpetrator(s) of a perceived injustice, taking action on that decision, and experiencing the emotional relief that follows”¹⁵⁾ and proposes a model for forgiveness counseling that involves a process of: 1) giving voices to the hurt and anger that allows the exploration of the perception of injustice and the validation of the right of the clients to their experiences and 2) making action decisions of whether and/or how to punish.¹⁶⁾

3) Clarification of Forgiveness

These objections and cautionary views of forgiveness seem to result from the confusion between forgiveness and other similar concepts such as condoning, pardoning, or excusing. Enright and Coyle provide

12) Sharon Lamb, “Introduction: Reasons to Be Cautious about the Use of Forgiveness in Psychotherapy,” in *Before Forgiving*, 3–14.

13) Neu, “To Understand All Is to Forgive All—Or Is It,” 22.

14) Neu, “To Understand All Is to Forgive All—Or Is It,” 17–38.

15) Mona Gustafson Affinito, “Forgiveness in Counseling: Caution, Definition, and Application,” in *Before Forgiving*, 93.

16) Affinito, “Forgiveness in Counseling: Caution, Definition, and Application,” 88–111.

a clear explanation about genuine forgiveness. They define that “forgiveness occurs when the injured person is able to view the wrongdoer with compassion, benevolence, and love while recognizing that he has willfully abandoned his right to them.”¹⁷⁾ Enright and Coyle point out three noteworthy points in genuine forgiveness as follows: “First, the injured one is able to recognize an actual injustice. Second, the injured one chooses willingly and without coercion to respond with mercy rather than what could be justifiable retribution. Third, forgiveness is decidedly moral, concerned with the good of human interaction.”¹⁸⁾ At this point, they argue that forgiveness is different from pardoning, in which an offender is spared the legal penalties caused by the offense; condoning, which implies that the injured justifies the offense occurred to him or her; excusing, in which the injured believes that the offender has a justifiable reason for committing the offense; and forgetting or denying. Regarding the criticism that forgiveness hinders social justice, Enright and Coyle assert that this criticism results from confusing pardon with forgiveness, pointing out that the injured one can forgive an offender even while the offender pays a legal cost as a consequence of his or her violation of the law.¹⁹⁾

Forgiveness also does not necessitate reconciliation, even though forgiveness appears to greatly facilitate reconciliation.²⁰⁾ In order to

17) Robert D. Enright and Catherine T. Coyle, “Researching the Process Model of Forgiveness within Psychological Interventions,” in *Dimensions of Forgiveness*, 140.

18) Enright and Coyle, “Researching the Process Model of Forgiveness within Psychological Interventions,” 140.

19) Enright and Coyle, “Researching the Process Model of Forgiveness within Psychological Interventions,” 139–161.

20) Enright and Coyle, “Researching the Process Model of Forgiveness within Psychological Interventions,” 139–161; Everett L. Worthington, Jr., “The Pyramid Model of Forgiveness: Some Interdisciplinary Speculations about Unforgiveness and the Promotion of Forgiveness,” in *Dimensions of Forgiveness*, 107–137.

achieve reconciliation, both parties must take one more step from forgiveness to rebuild the relationship and restore genuinely good feelings.²¹⁾ There are circumstances that we cannot regard reconciliation as reasonable or ethical. For example, we cannot expect a victim to reconcile with his or her sex offender even though he or she can forgive the sex offender.

In addition, forgiveness is not limited to forgiving others. When people experience offenses, they usually develop negative thoughts, emotions (i.e. anger), and behaviors (i.e. seeking revenge) toward the offender and the offense. These offenses can come from self, others, God, or situations when people perceive an event as violating their expectations and assumptions about how they, others, God or the world “ought” to be.²²⁾ In the same event, one might blame God while another might blame the specific situation, the world, or fate.

In sum, forgiveness is a positive religious coping method with a hurt or offense that primarily benefits the injured person through a transformation of emotions, cognitions, and behaviors toward the offender. The offender can be self, others, God, or situations. Forgiveness aids in lessening the feelings of resentment, vengefulness, and anger that is associated with the unwillingness to forgive, and it increases sympathy and pity for the offender. However, forgiveness does not necessitate reconciliation and differs from tolerating, forgetting, pardoning, condoning, or excusing.

21) Elliot N. Dorff, “The Element of Forgiveness: A Jewish Approach,” in *Dimensions of Forgiveness*, 29–55.

22) Laura Yamhure Thompson et al., “Dispositional Forgiveness of Self, Others, and Situations,” *Journal of Personality* 73 (2005): 313–359.

2. Three Clients who Struggled with Forgiveness

Joan was a 25 year-old female whom I met at a Christian psychiatric hospital. She suffered from bipolar disorder and questioned why God had created her with a disorder. She expressed strong anger towards God. She spent a lot of money shopping with her credit card when she was in a manic state and was hospitalized after attempting suicide in a depressed mood because of her credit card debts. It was her third suicide attempt.

Jessica, a 53 year-old female, whom I worked with in an outpatient clinic, presented depression, anxiety, and strong anger toward her parents-in-law because they hid her husband's schizophrenia and arranged for her to marry him. Her father and father-in-law grew up in the same town in Korea and kept in touch even after her husband's family immigrated to America. The two families arranged for their children to marry each other, which was common in the Korean culture at that time. She moved to America, leaving her family in Korea without having knowledge of her future husband's history of mental illness. She eventually learned that her husband had been diagnosed with schizophrenia before they were married. She felt utterly betrayed and had strong anger against her parents-in-law, but she could not consider divorce because of her conservative Christian belief against divorce. She also felt that she could not abandon her husband whom she felt was a genuinely good person except his mental illness. Her resentment and anger escalated as she experienced her parents-in-law's lack of help and disregard for the hardships she was facing. Because her parents-in-law felt ashamed about their son's mental illness, they kept a distant relationship with her husband and her.

Matthew, who is another client that I met in an inpatient psychiatric unit, attempted to electrocute himself in a bathtub with a hair dryer after his fiancée died in a car accident six days prior to admission to the hospital. While she was driving up to another city to finish up some wedding preparations, an eighteen-year-old drunk driver hit her car. Both his fiancée and the drunken driver died in the accident. Matthew felt responsible and angry for not driving with her because he knew that she was not a good long distance driver. He also felt anger toward his dead fiancée who did not listen to his advice to fly instead of drive to the other city. He was angry with the drunken driver and even with the fiancée's parents and brother who blamed him because he did not go with her. Lastly, he was angry at God who allowed the accident to happen.

3. Elements that Promote Forgiveness in Therapy

When considering that therapy is processed in the relationship between a therapist and a client, factors that promote forgiveness in therapy are influenced by elements that are related to the therapist, the client, and the method of forgiveness interventions.

1) Therapists and Forgiveness

First, factors related to therapists can affect cases dealing with issues related to forgiveness and the use of forgiveness interventions in therapy. Research findings showed that most therapists considered addressing forgiveness issues in therapy as appropriate.²³⁾ Forgiveness

23) Varda Konstam et al., "Forgiving: What Mental Health Counselors are Telling Us," *Journal of Mental Health Counseling* 22(2005): 253-267; Roy T. Denton and Michael W. Martin, "Defining Forgiveness: An Empirical Exploration of Process and Role," *American Journal of Family Therapy* 26(1998): 281-292.

was particularly helpful with relationship issues, grief and loss, and guilt associated with abuse of substance use, and there were no significant differences between clinicians with different religious orientations.²⁴⁾

DiBlasio and Proctor also found that practitioners were more likely develop techniques related to forgiveness if they were older and reported openness to assessing and working with clients' religious belief systems. However, their levels of religiosity were not significantly related to the development and use of forgiveness techniques.²⁵⁾ DiBlasio's study also showed that highly religious social workers were more likely to express positive attitudes toward forgiveness relative to less religious social workers. However, their positive attitudes did not transfer to a greater emphasis on forgiveness in therapy. These two studies showed that the therapists who had a higher level of religiosity and more positive attitudes toward forgiveness did not necessarily more use forgiveness interventions in therapy than did others who had a lower level of religiosity and less positive attitudes toward forgiveness. The therapists' experiences and willingness to employ a client's religious belief system in therapy seem to be a more important factor in using forgiveness interventions in therapy rather than their level of religiosity and positive attitude toward forgiveness.²⁶⁾

Joan, Jessica, and Matthew were all Christians, and Jessica and Matthew frequently revealed their Christian beliefs as well as their

24) Denton and Martin, "Defining Forgiveness: An Empirical Exploration of Process and Role," 281–292.

25) Frederick A. DiBlasio and Judith Harris Proctor, "Therapists and the Clinical Use of Forgiveness," *American Journal of Family Therapy* 21(1993): 175–184.

26) Frederick A. DiBlasio, "The Role of Social Workers' Religious Beliefs in Helping Family Members Forgive," *Families in Society* 74(1993): 163–170.

struggles with their faith during therapy. Jessica had relational problems with her parents-in-law, and Matthew was going through loss and grief process. As a Christian therapist, I actively engaged in religious dialogues with them and embraced their Christian faith during therapy. Their openness to discuss forgiveness in therapy as well as my willingness to assess and work with their religious belief systems facilitated to bring up issues related to forgiveness in therapy.

2) Clients and Forgiveness

According to Wade, Bailey, and Shaffer, forgiveness therapy is effective when clients have had enough sessions with their current therapists, have greater self-esteem, and exclusively talk about forgiveness in therapy.²⁷⁾ Jessica and Matthew were open to discuss their hurts and angers, but it took time for us to discuss the possibility of forgiveness. I met with Jessica over a year on a weekly basis and remember that we spent a lot of sessions processing her complicated feelings over her family situation. We could proceed to discuss the possibility of forgiving her parents-in-law after we processed her long-standing anger with them for a number of sessions. She presented symptoms of depression and anxiety. Matthew and I were also able to proceed in discussing the possibility of forgiveness when we approached the end of therapy due to his discharge. I met with Matthew two to three times a week for two and a half weeks. Usually the session lasted 70 minutes to 90 minutes. I met with Joan only once and could not discuss forgiveness issues.

27) Nathaniel G. Wade et al., "Helping Clients Heal: Does Forgiveness Make a Difference?" *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* 36 (2005): 634-641.

3) Effective Forgiveness Interventions

(1) Forgiving Others

Forgiveness intervention models that have been developed to promote forgiving others can be grouped in two research groups, Enright group (the Process Model of Forgiveness) and Worthington group (the Pyramid Model of Forgiveness). Including Enright's model and Worthington's model, forgiveness interventions have core elements to promote forgiveness: the process of defining of forgiveness with clients, recalling the hurt, building empathy, acknowledging own offenses, committing forgiveness, and overcoming unforgiveness.²⁸⁾ A meta-analysis conducted by Baskin and Enright revealed the greater effectiveness of the process-based interventions than the decision-based interventions within three groups, decision based group, process-based group, and process-based individual interventions. Also, the longer-term individual counseling was more effective than the medium-length group counseling within the process models.²⁹⁾

The therapies that I had with Jessica and Matthew were the longer-term process-based individual therapies. Jessica repeatedly expressed her anger and resentment toward her parents-in-law. She was a devoted Christian, but for years she had harbored unforgiveness towards her parents-in-law because they never asked for forgiveness nor did they express any feelings of guilt or sorrow for what they had done to her. She was especially hurt by her mother-in-law who played a major role in the arrangement of her marriage. In fact, her mother-

28) Nathaniel G. Wade and Everett L. Worthington Jr., "In Search of a Common Core: A Content Analysis of Interventions to Promote Forgiveness," *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training* 42(2005): 160-177.

29) Thomas W. Baskin and Robert D. Enright, "Intervention Studies on Forgiveness: A Meta-analysis," *Journal of Counseling & Development* 82(2004): 79-90.

in-law was always harsh with her and later passed away. It really took a long time to explore and release her anger through therapy. After a number of sessions, I could ask her to think about the negative aspects of holding on to the hurt. She eventually made a decision to forgive them and let her negative feelings go. In the next session, she shared that she visited her mother-in-law's grave and told her dead mother-in-law that she forgave her. Even though we did not explicitly discuss the forgiveness process itself, the discussion of the negative aspects of holding on to the hurt led her to commit to forgiveness. After she forgave her parents-in-law and was able to let the past go, she reported improvement in her mood and expressed that she was feeling more connected with God.

Matthew forgave his fiancée's family when he came to empathize with them and tried to put himself in their shoes. Even though I did not explicitly address the forgiveness issue, he opened up the discussion of forgiveness after we spent a lot of time processing his loss, grief, and hurt from their family. As he released his anger and resentment in therapy, he came to see them differently, and eventually, he was able to empathize with them. The forgiving process came helped him in his depression, and he recovered his faith as he resolved his anger with God as we will discuss it later. We did not discuss much about the drunk driver who also died in that accident. He stated that he wants to meet and talk with the parents of the drunk driver in the future. For Jessica and Matthew, a sensitive process of exploring their hurts and anger with a non-judgmental attitude and appropriate timing led to the discussion of forgiveness issues and forgiving the offenders.

(2) Forgiving Self

Holmgren presents the process of self-forgiveness similar to forgiving others. It involves acknowledging the full responsibility for

one's wrong act, acknowledging the feelings that arise for one in connection with his or her offense, addressing the beliefs, attitudes, and behavior patterns that led to the offense, and making amends for the wrong.³⁰⁾ Matthew came to a place that led him to forgive himself when he discussed what he could have done differently to protect his fiancée. His acknowledgment of the reality that he did all he could do to protect his fiancée led him to forgive himself.

(3) Forgiving God

Forgiving God can be theologically problematic because God does not offend us. However, when we cannot understand God's providence, we feel offended and experience anger toward God. Then, when we become to understand and accept God's providence, we may psychologically experience forgiving God. Smedes suggests forgiving God when we are hurt by reminding that God suffers with us when we suffer.³¹⁾ Unfortunately, I could not reach this point with Joan due to limited time. We had only one session, and soon she was discharged. I listened to her painful illustration of her illness, frustration about herself, and anger with God. I tried to provide a supportive environment so that she could release her emotions and to convey the message that God is big enough to hold her anger with Him.

I had a number of sessions with Matthew and could process his anger with God in depth. In addition, a hospital chaplain worked with him. Basically I empathetically listened to his feelings and sometimes gave him feedback that God might know how he was feeling. I sometimes gave him some comments that would help him recall Jesus

30) Margaret R. Holmgren, "Forgiveness and Self-Forgiveness in Psychotherapy," in *Before Forgiving*, 112-135.

31) Lewis B. Smedes, *Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We Don't Deserve* (San Francisco, CA.: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 82-92.

suffering for us and with us. In one of the last sessions, he reported that he asked God to forgive his suicide attempt after he consulted the chaplain. He said that he was afraid that God might take away his salvation because of his suicide attempt, but the chaplain reassured him that his salvation could not be cancelled in any situation if he already accepted Jesus as his Savior. It resolved his fear and led him to ask God to forgive his suicide attempt. He stated that he did not have the right to forgive God as a creature and recovered his faith through his reassured belief that God had reasons to take his fiancée even though he could not understand them at this moment and his recalled Jesus who suffered in this world. This process empowered him spiritually and helped him feel closer to God.

III. Conclusion

My clinical reflections show that forgiveness leads to the lessening of feelings of resentfulness, vengefulness, and anger, which are associated with the unwillingness to forgive, and it brings positive outcomes in therapy. Particularly, the therapist's openness to work with the client's religious belief system, the enough number of sessions that allow the client to build a trusting relationship with the therapist and exclusively talk about forgiveness in therapy, and the sensitive use of forgiveness interventions relevant to the client's situation are vital in promoting forgiveness in therapy. By using sensitive therapy that effectively deals with forgiveness issues, clients may not only improve their clinical symptoms but also become mature in the midst of their sufferings.

[Bibliography]

- Baskin, Thomas W. and Robert D. Enright. "Intervention Studies on Forgiveness: A Meta-Analysis." *Journal of Counseling & Development* 82(2004): 79-90.
- Coyle, Catherine E. and Robert D. Enright. "Forgiveness Intervention with Postabortion Men." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 65(1997): 1042-1046.
- Denton, Roy. T. and Michael W. Martin. "Defining forgiveness: An Empirical Exploration of Process and Role." *American Journal of Family Therapy* 26 (1998): 281-292.
- DiBlasio, Federick. A. "The Role of Social Workers' Religious Beliefs in Helping Family Members Forgive." *Families in Society* 74(1993): 163-170.
- DiBlasio, Federick. A., and Judith H. Proctor. "Therapists and the Clinical Use of Forgiveness." *American Journal of Family Therapy* 21(1993): 175-184.
- Dorff, Elliot. N. "The Element of Forgiveness: A Jewish Approach." In *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research, Theological Perspectives*. ed. Everett L. Worthington, Jr. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 1998, 29-55.
- Enright, Robert. D. and Catherine. T. Coyle. "Researching the Process Model of Forgiveness within Psychological Interventions." In *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research, Theological Perspectives*. ed. Everett L. Worthington, Jr. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 1998, 139-161.
- Freedman, Suzanne. R., and Robert D. Enright. "Forgiveness as an Intervention Goal with Incest Survivors." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 64(1996): 983-992.
- Holmgren, Margaret. R. "Forgiveness and Self-Forgiveness in Psychotherapy." In *Before Forgiving: Cautionary Views of Forgiveness in Psychotherapy*.

- eds. Sharon Lamb and Jeffrie G. Murphy. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 12-135.
- Konstam, Varda., Fern Marx, Jennifer Schurer, Anne Harrington, Nancy Emerson Lombardo, and Sara Deveney. "Forgiving: What Mental Health Counselors are Telling Us." *Journal of Mental Health Counseling* 22(2005): 253-267.
- Lamb, Sharon. "Introduction: Reasons to Be Cautious about the Use of Forgiveness in Psychotherapy." In *Before Forgiving: Cautionary Views of Forgiveness in Psychotherapy*. eds. Sharon Lamb and Jeffrie G. Murphy. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 3-14.
- Marty, Martin. E. "The Ethos of Christian Forgiveness." In *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research, Theological Perspectives*. ed. Everett L Worthington, Jr. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 1998, 9-28.
- McCullough, Michael. E., Steven J. Sandage, and Everett L. Worthington. *To Forgive is Human: How to Put Your Past in the Past*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997.
- Neu, Jerome. "To Understand All is To Forgive All—or Is It?" In *Before Forgiving: Cautionary Views of Forgiveness in Psychotherapy*. eds. Sharon Lamb and Jeffrie G. Murphy. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002, 17-38.
- Pargament, Kenneth. I. and Mark S. Rye. "Forgiveness as a Method of Religious Coping. In *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research, Theological Perspectives*. ed. Everett L. Worthington, Jr. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 1998, 59-78.
- Rye, Mark S. and Kenneth I. Pargament. "Forgiveness and Romantic Relationships in College: Can it Heal the Wounded Heart?" *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 54(2002): 419-463.
- Rye, Mark. S., Kenneth I. Pargament, M. Amir Ali, Guy L. Beck, Elliot N. Dorff, Charles Hallisey, Vasudha Narayanan, and James G. Williams. "Religious Perspectives on Forgiveness." In *Forgiveness: Theory, Research, and Practice*. eds. Michael McGullough,

- Kenneth I. Pargament, and Carl. E. Thoresen. New York: The Guilford Press, 2000, 17-40.
- Smedes, Lewis. B. *Forgive and Forget: Healing the Hurts We don't Deserve*. San Francisco, CA.: Harper Collins Publishers, 2007.
- Thompson, Laura Y., C. R. Snyder, Lesa Hoffman, Scott T. Michael, Heather N. Rasmussen, Laura S. Billings, Laura Heinze, L, Jason E. Neufeld, Hal S. Shorey, Jessica C. Roberts, and Danae E. Roberts. "Dispositional Forgiveness of Self, Others, and Situations." *Journal of Personality* 73(2005): 313-359.
- Wade, Nathaniel. G., Danna C. Bailey, and Philip Shaffer. "Helping Clients Heal: Does Forgiveness Make a Difference?" *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice* 36(2005): 634-641.
- Wade, Nathaniel. G. and Everett L. Worthington, Jr. "In Search of a Common Core: A Content Analysis of Interventions to Promote Forgiveness." *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training* 42(2005): 160-177.
- Worthington, Jr. Everett. L. "The Pyramid Model of Forgiveness: Some Interdisciplinary Speculations about Unforgiveness and the Promotion of Forgiveness." In *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research, Theological Perspectives*. ed. Everett L. Worthington, Jr. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press, 1998, 107-137.

【 국문초록 】

용서에 영향을 미치는 요소들: 세 가지 사례를 중심으로

홍 구 화

합동신학대학원대학교

용서는 종교적인 대처 방법 중의 하나로써 가해자에 대한 피해자의 생각과 감정과 행동에 변화를 가져오므로써 피해자에게 유익을 준다. 가해는 자기 자신, 다른 사람들, 하나님, 또는 상황에 의하여 일어날 수 있다. 용서는 용서하지 못하는 감정들을 완화시키고 가해자에 대한 긍정적인 관점을 갖도록 이끌어 준다. 본 연구의 연구자의 임상경험들과 기존의 연구결과들은 상담에서 용서를 촉진시키는 요소들을 몇 가지 제시해 준다. 상담자 측면에서 볼 때, 상담자가 내담자의 종교 신념 체계에 접근하고 그것을 다루는 데에 개방적일 때 용서에 대한 이슈는 효과적으로 다루어진다. 그리고 내담자가 충분한 상담 횟수를 통하여 상담자와 신뢰관계를 구축하였을 때 또 상담 중에 용서에 대하여 구체적으로 분명히 이야기할 때 용서에 대한 이슈들이 상담 중에 효과적으로 다루어진다. 효과적인 용서 기법들을 상담에서 이용하는 것도 용서에 중요하고 이것은 곧 좋은 임상 결과들을 가져온다. 효과적인 용서 기법들의 핵심 요소들은 용서에 대해 정의내리기, 상처를 떠올리기, 공감 형성, 자신의 가해를 인식하기, 용서하기로 헌신하기, 용서하지 못하는 것을 극복하기를 포함한다. 상담자가 내담자의 상황에 민감하게 효과적인 기법들을 사용할 때, 용서 상담은 내담자의 임상적인 증상들을 개선시켜 줄뿐만 아니라 고통 가운데에서 내담자가 자라고 성숙하게 도와 줄 수 있다.

중심단어: 용서, 상담, 상담에서 용서를 촉진시키는 요소들, 용서의 치료적 효과, 종교적 대처방법