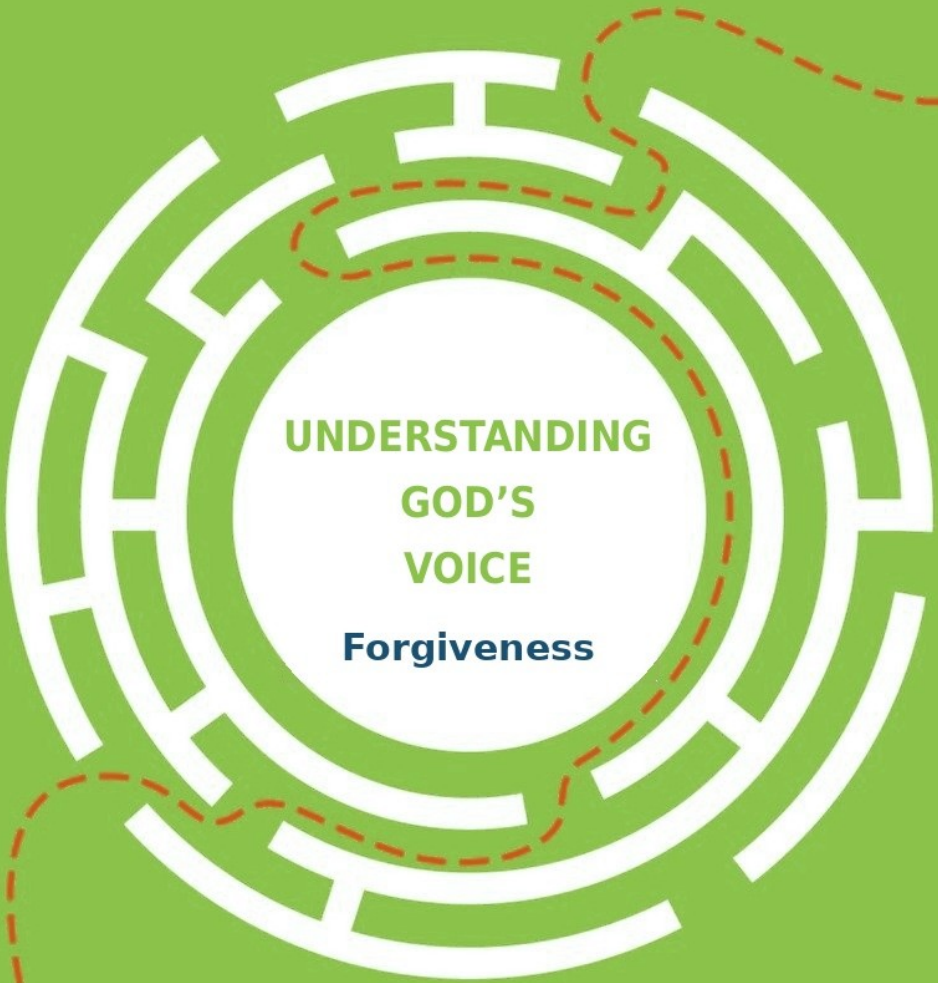
NUDGES 9

Nudges in the right direction



UNDERSTANDING GOD'S VOICE

Forgiveness

Wim Kamphorst

NUDGES

Nudges in the right direction

Forgiveness

Wim Kamphorst

Foreword

Peter thought he was being generous. He asked Jesus: “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?” And he suggested an answer himself: seven times. That is a lot. Most people give up after one or two times. But Jesus answered that it is not about counting.

> *“Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.”*
> Matthew 18:22

Forgiveness is one of the hardest subjects I know. From the last year of primary school on, I was bullied for years. I know how it feels when someone hurts you and never says sorry. I also know how it feels to be the one who fell short.

This booklet is not a quick fix. These are nudges: small pushes to receive God’s forgiveness, and to pass that forgiveness on, step by step. Because I have discovered that forgiveness does not only set the other person free. Above all it sets you free.

Wim Kamphorst, founder of (F)Luister Nederland

Introduction

Forgiveness does not begin with us. It begins with God. Before you can forgive someone else, you may first receive that you yourself are forgiven. On the cross Jesus carried everything that separated us from God. Even before I could do anything good, He already loved me. Right down to the wrong things that He took upon Himself there.

> *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*
> 1 John 1:9

Out of that receiving flows the passing on. Paul writes it very simply: forgive one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you. The measure of our forgiveness is not what the other person deserves, but what we ourselves have received.

A closer look:

The Greek word that is often translated as forgive in the New Testament is aphiemi. It literally means: to let go, to release, to send away. So forgiving is not pretending that nothing happened. It is letting go of something you are holding on to, and laying it in God's hands.

Chapter 1 Receiving forgiveness

Many Christians know that they are forgiven. They can recite it. But deep inside they keep condemning themselves. They keep their distance from God, because they think they first have to be clean again before they may come to Him.

From months to immediately

That is how it was with me for a long time. When I had sinned, it sometimes took months before I dared to come to God again, truly heart to heart. Shame, guilt and disappointment in myself kept me at a distance. Through the love of God something began to change there. The months became weeks, the weeks became days. Until the moment came when I could bring God into it immediately, in the moment itself.

He was not afraid of my sin. I did not have to be clean first to come home. That is the heart of receiving forgiveness: you go to Him with your failure, not away from Him.

What lies underneath

God is not only interested in what you do wrong. He also looks at what lies underneath. When I had struggled with an addiction for years, one day I cried out. In the middle of that cry I thought: why does it seem that I want to stop more than God does? At that moment I opened up to what He wanted to say. And He began somewhere completely different. Not about my behavior, but about my wounds. Rejection, disappointment, feelings of inferiority.

Receiving forgiveness is therefore more than saying sorry. It is letting God in at the places where it hurts.

> *"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."*
> Psalm 103:12

Noise on the line

In the booklet Understanding God's Voice I wrote about noise on the line. If you think that God is angry with you, you mostly hear condemnation. But condemnation does not fit Jesus. The Holy Spirit does convict of sin, but He does so to bring you back, not to make you small. Conviction draws you toward Jesus. Condemnation pushes you away from Him. That is how you can recognize the difference.

Chapter 2 Passing on forgiveness

Jesus linked our praying to forgiving. In the Lord's Prayer we pray: "forgive us our debts, as we also forgive our debtors." And He added that we must forgive when we are standing praying and have something against someone. Unforgiveness is like a plug in the pipe between us and God.

> *"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses."*
> Mark 11:25

Forgiving is not excusing

Forgiving does not mean that what happened was okay. It also does not mean that you have to make yourself unsafe again. You can forgive someone and at the same time set boundaries. Forgiving is taking the debt out of your hands and giving it to God. You no longer have to be the judge. That is His work.

Joseph had every reason to hate his brothers. They had sold him as a slave. Years later he stood before them as a powerful man. He chose not to strike back.

> *"But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive."*
> Genesis 50:20

Healing in layers

The pain of the bullying ran deep. I had closed myself off, first from school, then from friends and in the end even from family. Those walls felt like protection. Only years later, when I was already a believer, did God show me how much influence that past still had on me.

In a short period I had three dreams. In each dream I again stood face to face with someone who had bullied me in the past. Where in the past I had not

dared to say anything, in the dream I said no. Each time I woke up with peace. That was not an endpoint, it was a beginning. For me, forgiving did not happen in a single prayer. It happened in layers.

Do not wait too long

There is also a story that I tell with pain. I had long since forgiven someone who had bullied me. One day I received a strong urge to let him know. Perhaps restoration could come. For three weeks that urge stayed, and for three weeks I did nothing with it. Then I heard that he had died. I was too late.

I do not share this to make you feel guilty. I share it because a prompting from God to put something right is serious. If He keeps laying someone's name on your heart, do not wait too long.

In the (F)Luister magazine someone told how, while praying, the same name kept coming into her thoughts. It was someone she had hurt years earlier. At first she pushed it away. In the end she sought contact and apologized. What began as a recurring thought in prayer led to the restoration of a relationship that had been damaged for years.

> *"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."*
> Ephesians 4:32

Angry at a pastor

Sometimes unforgiveness stands in the way of receiving something from God. I once became angry at a pastor, because a friend of mine had been deeply hurt by him. Weeks later I was at a conference where that same pastor was speaking. I became tired and wanted to go home. As I was walking toward the exit, he said: "There is someone here with eczema." I had had eczema for nine months and had tried all kinds of things for it.

Despite my difficulty with the messenger, I said softly: “Thank You, Lord.” Two days later the eczema was gone. Looking back, I am grateful that my offense at a person had not grown so big that I missed God’s speaking because of it.

Chapter 3 How do you grow in forgiveness?

Forgiveness is a choice and a process at the same time. You choose to let go, and afterwards God lets the healing grow. A few nudges:

1. **Receive first yourself**

   Take time to confess to God what is bothering you, without making it prettier. Then read 1 John 1:9 out loud. Ask: “Father, how do You look at me now?” Write down what you hear. If it sounds condemning, it does not come from Him.

2. **Ask God whom you need to forgive**

   Ask in silence: “Lord, against whom do I still have something?” Pay attention to the names or faces that come up. Write them down. Say out loud, person by person: “I forgive … for …” Be concrete. You do not have to feel it to choose it.

3. **Bless those who hurt you**

   For a week, speak a blessing every day over someone who has hurt you. At first that may feel fake. Notice what changes in your own heart. Bitterness gets less room when you bless.

4. **Take a step toward restoration**

   Does God keep laying someone’s name on your heart? Pray for wisdom and take a small step: a card, a text message, a cup of coffee. If it is sensitive, first discuss it with someone you trust. Restoration is not always possible, but you can do your part.

5. **Do not let the sun go down**

   Make it a habit to look back for a moment every evening. Was there something today that chafed? Bring it to God before you go to sleep. Small irritations that you let go of daily do not become big wounds.

Forgiveness is not weakness. It is the strongest choice you can make. Jesus did it on the cross, for us. Whoever receives that can pass it on too.

FAQ

Question: I have forgiven someone, but the pain keeps coming back. Does that mean I have not truly forgiven?
Answer: That is very normal. Forgiving is a choice, healing is a process. When the pain returns, you may make your choice again and bring the pain to God. For me it happened in layers. Each time I gave it to Him again, it became lighter.

Question: Do I have to tell the other person if I have forgiven him?
Answer: Not always. Sometimes it is wise and helpful, sometimes it only makes things more complicated or unsafe. Ask God for guidance and discuss it with someone you trust. If God keeps pointing you to it, take that seriously.

Question: How do I forgive myself?
Answer: By believing what God says about you. If He has forgiven you, you are not stricter than He is. Confess what you have done, receive His forgiveness and, where you can, put something right. If you notice that you stay stuck in guilt, find someone who will pray with you. Sometimes there is an old wound underneath.

At whispermagazine.org you can read true stories of people who heard God speak, learn more about hearing His voice and read our free Whisper magazine.

About (F)Luister Nederland

(F)Luister Nederland is a movement that wants to help believers understand the voice of God and grow in it. We believe that God still speaks today and that His children can learn to recognize, understand and obey His voice.

Our mission

We want to equip and encourage people to walk in relationship with Jesus in their daily lives, led by the Holy Spirit. It is our desire that more and more followers of Jesus learn to listen to His whisper and take bold steps in response.

Our vision

We see a church and a society in which God's voice is central once again. Where believers do not only listen to sermons or opinions, but live out of an intimate relationship with their Father in heaven. A generation that understands God's voice and, as a result, makes a difference in their surroundings.

Together we learn to understand His voice

There is more

This booklet is a nudge in the right direction. Do you want to go further? Whisper has more to help you on your way.

Whisper magazine
Our free magazine, to read online. **whispermagazine.org/magazine.html**

Seliah, our app
Our free app, for on the go. **whispermagazine.org/app**

How do you test an impression?
Ten questions to test what you hear. **whispermagazine.org/how-do-you-test.html**

More Nudges
Booklets on other themes. **whispermagazine.org/nudges.html**

Listening together
A guide for your small group. **whispermagazine.org/listening-together.html**

Quiet. I am listening.
A free 30-day reading plan. **whispermagazine.org/magazine.html**

The Listening Profile
How do you hear God? **whispermagazine.org/listening-profile.html**

True stories
People who heard God speak. **whispermagazine.org/stories.html**

Questions and answers
Short Bible-based answers. **whispermagazine.org/questions.html**

Everything in one place: whispermagazine.org

Scan the code to visit Whisper. In Dutch on Instagram and Facebook: @fluisternederland.nl

Questions, or want to share a testimony? info@fluisternederland.nl

Forgiveness

Listening to Him. Becoming free through forgiveness.

God speaks. Every day. Not only to prophets or spiritual leaders, but to each one of us. The problem is not that He is silent, but that we often do not tune in properly.

In this book, Wim Kamphorst takes you on a journey to learn to recognize, understand and obey the voice of God. You will discover:

- how God's forgiveness is the foundation under your life;
- why forgiving is different from excusing;
- five nudges to forgive and to seek restoration.

Wim Kamphorst was bullied for years. He discovered that forgiving is not finished in a single prayer, but that God heals a wound in layers.

With personal testimonies, clear Bible passages and practical examples, this book makes clear that forgiving and receiving forgiveness is something that is close to God's heart.

God speaks.
Whom may you let go of today?

