

# Seeking Forgiveness - Five Memos

## 1. **Acknowledge Your Sin and Label it Biblically**– James 5:16

Example: “I was not thoughtful about your interests and desires” (Rom 12:17-18); “I spoke in an unwholesome way” (Eph 4:29-30); “I lied” (Eph 4:25); “I became bitter or angry” (Eph 4:31-32); “I was foolish in my decision making (Ps 111:10); “I rushed to judgment or had a judgmental spirit” (James 4:11); I was quick to believe one side of the story and thus ‘foolish’ according to Prov.18:13,17; The fact of sin was not established because there were not two witnesses (Matt .18:16); I did not trust God to reveal the truth of the situation in His time (1 Cor. 4:5); I vilified you in my mind (and maybe with my mouth), forgetting any good, forgetting mercy and patience and seeking only justice (Eph 4:31-32; Eph 4:1-3; James 2:13)

## 2. **Share Biblically Why You Sinned** - James 1:14; 1 John 2:16

Be careful here for this is the easiest step to get wrong. Remember you did not sin because you were a victim of circumstances or because the other person “sinned” against you or because you had a “miscommunication” or were sick. These all can contribute to your sin and indeed God may desire you to give attention to this another time in a context of humbly solving problems. But these are not confession of sin but rather excuses for sin. There are only two primary biblical reasons for all sin that lie at the root:

- **Selfishness** (i.e. lack of love) - (Read James 1:14-15 and James 4:1-4)  
“I was selfish in my desires about \_\_\_\_\_. (List what you wanted that led to the sin). I made getting this an idol – letting it become, at that moment, my definition of good; instead of the nearness, pleasure and reward of Christ in my life. (Read Ps 73:28.)  
Bottom line. I did not love you and God more than myself.”
- **Pride** (i.e. lack of humility) (Read 1 John 2:16)  
“I had too high a view of myself (i.e. an attitude of: “I deserve better”, “I’m more important than you”, “Your perspective is not important”, etc.) These proud beliefs justified my selfishness and sinful actions. (Read Prov. 13:10). Bottom line, I lacked humility of mind before you and God. (Phil 2:3-5; James 4:10; 1 Peter 4:4-6)

## 3. **Express Your Sorrow** – 2 Cor. 7:10

You are admitting the ugliness of how you acted before God and them.

You are seeking to identify with them - how it provoked them to feel or react.

## 4. **Ask for Forgiveness** – Matt. 5:23-24

“I have asked God to forgive me and I now ask you to please release me from the debt – delete it from my record – seek to remember it no more.”

## 5. **Share, in Brief, Your Plan of Change** – 2 Cor. 7:11

Share how God wanted you to handle this differently. Give some practical, biblical steps you will take to prevent your selfishness and pride from ruling your response, before a circumstance like this arises again (both preemptive and conjointly).