



# Why is forgiveness so hard?

At first blush, TV shows like *The Biggest Loser* and *Australian Idol* look like nothing more than chewing gum for the eyes.

But when you think about what drives Australians to watch these shows, there's actually a deep thing going on. Shows like these speak to our hunger to overhaul our lives. As we watch, we find ourselves in the participant's shoes thinking: "If she can lose all that weight then surely I can!"

Surveys show that when you ask people what they'd most like to change, you'll hear two things. The first is obvious – people want to be fitter, or at least look fitter.

But the second is deeper. People want to be closer to other people. To family, to mates, to the neighbours they can't even name. And, when they're brutally honest, you'll hear that people want to be closer to their spouse.

As hard as it is to change our appearance or lose 15 kilos, it's very nearly impossible to overhaul our relationships. It means doing the most painful, unnatural act we can ever attempt: **Forgiveness**.

It may hurt to lose a layer of fat, but it's intolerable to lose a layer of resentment. When we brood over those who've hurt us we set in concrete the anger and hatred. "Why should I forgive?" we ask, "when all this pain has happened to me?"

In Jesus Christ we see an innocent man who loved his enemies. Yet thousands rejoiced at seeing him die, even as his painful death bore their sin. No one has been more sinned against than Jesus, and no one deserved punishment less, yet he was able to say in the middle of his pain: "Father forgive them."

God knows our problem is our hard heart. He promised long ago through the prophet Ezekiel that he would give us new hearts. Soft, forgiving hearts, filled with the Spirit of God. But we don't deserve new hearts! God is entitled to be angry with us!

Therefore at the cross, God poured his hatred for our sin on Jesus so that he might pour his love into our hearts. Jesus, who is God, took the brunt of what we deserve. Jesus' death enabled God to forgive us, preparing the way for serious heart surgery. So... Have you had a heart transplant? The Bible calls this being 'born again'.

**Prayer:** Father please forgive my sins and give me a new heart so that I might forgive others.