



# The Science of Forgiveness and Reconciliation

This powerful course brings cutting-edge science into the mainstream.

At first glance, you might think forgiveness looks like a bundle of paradoxes: “Love your enemies,” and what have you (Matthew 5:44 NABRE). But in recent decades, scientists have picked up where philosophers and theologians left off—confirming the many benefits that practicing forgiveness will bring you.

In this course, you will study the scientific approach to forgiveness and the ways in which it complements approaches advocated by philosophers and theologians throughout history. Professor Everett Worthington is part of the generation that first took an interest in studying forgiveness scientifically and clinically. He brings decades of experience in couple counseling, as well as research on forgiveness in the context of justice and faith, to the fore.

Because the scientific interest in forgiveness falls under the general rubric of positive psychology, forgiveness is seen as a choice—and a good habit to get into. Studies show that the consistent practice of forgiveness reaps rewards to your physical, psychological, relational, and spiritual health and wellbeing. On a bigger scale, forgiveness is a central pillar in promoting peace among groups, organizations, and societies.

In the space of 15 25-minute lectures, you will examine eight theories that synthesize scientific findings about forgiveness. Some are more complete than others, and you are encouraged to weigh the strengths of each theory against your own experience. From there, you will segue into a discussion of the fruits of scientific studies.

This is where the rubber meets the road. How can you apply these findings to your individual situation? Prof. Worthington offers you practical guidance about interventions—devoting special attention to his REACH Forgiveness model.

Through this groundbreaking and masterful course, you will acquire the tools to think not only philosophically or theologically about forgiveness, but also practically. You’ll find that the scientific approach to forgiveness will indelibly enrich your life and relationships.



**Everett Worthington, Ph.D.**, is a clinical psychologist and world-leading expert on forgiveness research. He has published more than 38 books and 440 articles and scholarly chapters—mostly on forgiveness, marriage, and family topics. He actively holds workshops and gives talks internationally, in addition to maintaining a website of free resources. Formerly President of the American Psychological Association Division 36 (the Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality),

Prof. Worthington’s awards include VCU’s Award for Excellence, and the Humanitarian Award from the Association for Spiritual, Ethical, and Religious Values in Counseling. In 2016, he was named one of the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia’s 13 Outstanding Professors in the Commonwealth.

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Professor Everett Worthington, Ph.D.  
Virginia Commonwealth University

“[Everett Worthington’s] insights about forgiveness and reconciliation have depth because they have been formed through personal suffering and growth even more than the research lab.”

– Dr. Steven J. Sandage,  
Boston University



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