

Forgiveness and Trauma Recovery for Adolescent Victims of Bullying: An Integrative Model of Christian Religious Education, Enright's Psychology, and Biblical Theology

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ABSTRACT

Bullying constitutes a serious threat to the psychological well-being of Indonesian adolescents. Data from the Indonesian Education Monitoring Network (Jaringan Pemantau Pendidikan Indonesia/JPPi) recorded a surge in bullying cases from 285 in 2023 to 573 in 2024, an increase of more than one hundred percent, with bullying accounting for 31% of all violence cases within educational settings. The resulting psychological impact anxiety, low self-esteem, post-traumatic symptoms, and disrupted socio-emotional development demands a recovery approach that extends beyond mere administrative-school policy. This study aims to develop an integrative model for trauma recovery among Christian adolescent victims of bullying by combining three aspek ons: pedagogical (Christian Religious Education/PAK), psychological (Enright's forgiveness process model), and theological-exegetical (Matthew 18:21–35). This research employs a descriptive qualitative method with a library research approach, conducting thematic-exegetical analysis of Matthew 18:21–35 alongside cross-disciplinary content analysis of literature on forgiveness intervention psychology, Christian religious education, and pastoral theology. The findings indicate that Enright's four-phase forgiveness process (uncovering, decision, work, deepening) demonstrates strong conceptual alignment with the theological meaning of forgiveness in the parable of the unforgiving servant, in which the phrase ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτὰ ("seventy times seven") affirms forgiveness as an active and sustained decision to rebuild relationship, rather than merely a transient emotional state. Christian Religious Education functions as the pedagogical vehicle that internalizes these values of love, justice, and forgiveness into adolescents' lives in a structured and sustained manner. The synthesis of these three aspek ons produces an integrative model that regards forgiveness not merely as a psychological coping strategy, but also as a faith response to God's gracious forgiveness in Christ, enabling adolescent bullying victims to break free from cycles of revenge and experience faith-based post-traumatic growth. This study contributes as a conceptual bridge between forgiveness psychology, which has developed within the secular-Western tradition, and Christian theological resources within the Indonesian context of religious education and pastoral counseling, while offering practical implications for the development of Christian religious education curricula and structured forgiveness programs in churches and Christian schools.

Keywords: Bullying; Christian Religious Education; forgiveness; integrative model; trauma recovery

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INTRODUCTION

Bullying has become one of the most serious threats to the psychological well-being and development of adolescents in Indonesia in recent years. Data released by the Indonesian Education Monitoring Network (Jaringan Pemantau Pendidikan Indonesia [JPPI]) reveal an alarming increase in bullying cases, rising from 285 cases in 2023 to 573 cases in 2024 an increase of more than 100% within a single year. Among all reported cases of violence in educational settings, bullying accounted for 31%, making it one of the most prevalent and concerning forms of violence. These figures represent more than administrative statistics; they reflect the traumatic experiences endured daily by thousands of Indonesian adolescents in both public and faith-based educational institutions, including Christian schools.

The psychological consequences of bullying during adolescence are multidimensional and often long-lasting. Victims frequently experience chronic anxiety, low self-esteem, symptoms resembling post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and socio-emotional developmental difficulties that may impair their ability to establish healthy interpersonal relationships later in life. Adolescence is a critical period for identity formation and self-concept development. Consequently, experiences of bullying during this developmental stage may leave enduring psychological wounds that persist into adulthood if appropriate intervention is not provided.

To date, institutional responses to bullying in Indonesia have primarily focused on administrative and school-based approaches, including the establishment of anti-bullying committees, the enforcement of disciplinary sanctions against perpetrators, and the dissemination of anti-violence policies. While these measures are undoubtedly important, they have proven insufficient in addressing the comprehensive psychological and spiritual recovery needs of victims. Such approaches tend to emphasize symptom management and the prevention of repeated incidents, yet they often fail to address the victims' inner struggles particularly how adolescents process the anger, resentment, bitterness, and emotional wounds resulting from their experiences of bullying.

Within this context, forgiveness has emerged as a promising pathway toward psychological healing, supported by substantial empirical evidence in clinical psychology. The forgiveness process model developed by Robert D. Enright and his colleagues has been extensively examined through intervention studies and has consistently demonstrated its effectiveness in reducing anger, anxiety, and depressive symptoms while enhancing self-esteem and psychological adjustment among individuals who have experienced injustice, including adolescent victims of bullying (Baskin & Enright, 2004; Park et al., 2013). In a study involving South Korean adolescent girls identified as aggressive victims, Park et al. (2013) found that participants who received forgiveness intervention exhibited significantly greater improvements in psychological adjustment, behavioral functioning, and academic performance than those in the control group.

Despite its strong empirical foundation, Enright's model was developed within the framework of Western secular psychology. Although it acknowledges the value of spirituality in general, it is not explicitly grounded in Christian theological principles. Conversely, the tradition of Christian Religious Education (CRE) and Indonesian biblical theology offers rich theological and pedagogical resources concerning forgiveness, particularly through Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18:21–35. However, these theological discussions have generally developed independently, without systematic engagement with the empirically validated literature on forgiveness interventions in psychology. This disconnect represents a significant research gap. The present study seeks to bridge this gap by exploring how Enright's evidence-based forgiveness model can be coherently integrated with the pedagogical principles of Christian Religious Education and the biblical-theological understanding of

forgiveness in Matthew 18:21–35 to develop a holistic model for trauma recovery among Christian adolescents who have experienced bullying in Indonesia.

Based on this background, the research question guiding this study is: How can Enright's forgiveness process model be integrated with the principles of Christian Religious Education and the biblical theology of Matthew 18:21–35 to construct a holistic and contextually relevant trauma recovery model for Christian adolescent victims of bullying?

Accordingly, this study aims to develop an integrative conceptual model that combines three complementary dimensions: (1) the pedagogical dimension represented by the contribution of Christian Religious Education; (2) the psychological dimension represented by Enright's forgiveness process model; and (3) the theological-exegetical dimension derived from an in-depth analysis of Matthew 18:21–35. Together, these three dimensions provide a comprehensive conceptual framework for promoting trauma recovery among Christian adolescents who have experienced bullying.

This study is expected to make a twofold contribution. Academically, it bridges the interdisciplinary dialogue between the psychology of forgiveness and Christian theology, two fields that have largely developed in parallel with limited conceptual integration. Practically, it provides a conceptual foundation for developing an evidence-informed and biblically grounded Christian Religious Education (CRE) curriculum, as well as for strengthening pastoral counseling practices in supporting adolescent victims of bullying toward comprehensive cognitive, emotional, and spiritual healing.

Previous studies relevant to this research can be categorized into three major clusters. The first cluster comprises psychological research on the effectiveness of forgiveness interventions. Baskin and Enright (2004), through a meta-analysis of nine intervention studies involving 330 participants, found that process-based forgiveness interventions, implemented in both individual and group settings, produced significantly greater improvements in forgiveness and emotional well-being than decision-based interventions. These findings were reinforced by Akhtar and Barlow (2018), whose systematic review and meta-analysis demonstrated the positive effects of forgiveness therapy on mental well-being, and by Enright and Fitzgibbons (2015), who developed a comprehensive empirically informed framework for forgiveness therapy aimed at resolving anger and restoring hope.

More specifically, within adolescent populations and bullying contexts, Park et al. (2013) demonstrated the effectiveness of forgiveness interventions among South Korean adolescent girls who had experienced aggressive victimization. Likewise, Egan and Todorov (2009) identified forgiveness as an effective coping strategy for school-aged victims dealing with the psychological consequences of bullying. More recent research by Watson, Todorov, and Rapee (2021) revealed a complex psychological dynamic among adolescent male victims of bullying, showing that both forgiveness and revenge fantasies were associated with certain adaptive outcomes under different circumstances. Furthermore, Quintana-Orts, Rey, and Worthington (2021), through a systematic review, concluded that forgiveness functions as a protective factor associated with lower levels of bullying and cyberbullying involvement among adolescents. Klatt and Enright (2009) further situated forgiveness within the framework of Positive Youth Development, highlighting its contribution to adolescent character formation, while Menesini et al. (2018) found that forgiveness, together with supportive friendships, protects adolescent victims of bullying from emotional maladjustment.

The second cluster focuses on studies examining Christian Religious Education (CRE) and bullying prevention within Indonesian Christian educational contexts. Tambunan and Arifianto (2025) emphasized the

strategic role of CRE in preventing bullying by cultivating Christian values such as love, forgiveness, justice, and respect for others as bearers of the image of God. Similarly, Sitorus et al. (2025) investigated the implementation of project-based Christian values within CRE instruction as an approach to bullying prevention, whereas Arifianto and Santo (2020) explored how the Christian faith responds to bullying in the era of social disruption. Within the field of pastoral counseling, Nego and Hulu (2020) examined pastoral care for adolescent victims of bullying, while a study published in the *Journal of Christian Education and Theology* (2024) analyzed pastoral counseling perspectives in addressing bullying-related insecurity among adolescents.

The third cluster consists of exegetical studies on Matthew 18:21–35. Korengkeng (2020) examined the concept of forgiveness in this passage and its implications for the contemporary church, concluding that Jesus' teaching presents forgiveness as unconditional and encompassing every form of wrongdoing. Lumbantobing and Siburian (2024) conducted a more focused exegetical analysis of Matthew 18:21–22 and its relevance to contemporary Christian life, whereas Sumiwi, Santo, and Lutuh (2023) specifically related the theological meaning of forgiveness in this passage to the spiritual formation of Christian youth. As a complementary perspective from another New Testament book, Hasibuan, Larosa, and Walean (2022) examined the theology of forgiveness in the Epistle to Philemon and its relevance for ministries of inner healing, thereby enriching the understanding of forgiveness as a pastoral theme throughout the New Testament.

Based on these three clusters of previous scholarship, the novelty of the present study can be clearly identified. First, psychological studies on the effectiveness of forgiveness interventions generally do not explicitly or systematically incorporate a Christian theological framework, although some acknowledge spirituality in a broad sense. Second, research in Christian Religious Education and pastoral counseling rarely engages directly with the empirically validated literature on forgiveness interventions, resulting in predominantly normative theological arguments with limited psychological support. Third, exegetical studies of Matthew 18:21–35 typically conclude with interpretations of the biblical text and its general implications for the church or Christian youth, without specifically addressing trauma recovery among adolescent victims of bullying or integrating their findings with a structured psychological framework such as Enright's forgiveness process model.

Accordingly, this study addresses these gaps by developing an integrative model that synthesizes three complementary dimensions pedagogical, psychological, and theological-exegetical to provide a comprehensive framework for trauma recovery among Christian adolescent victims of bullying in Indonesia. This integrative approach represents a novel contribution by combining evidence-based psychological theory, biblical theology, and Christian educational principles into a unified model capable of informing both educational practice and pastoral ministry.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design using a library research approach. This approach was selected because the objective of the study is conceptual in nature, namely, to develop an integrative model through the analysis and synthesis of interdisciplinary literature from theology, psychology, and Christian Religious Education (CRE), rather than through the collection of empirical field data. Sari and Asmendri (2020) argue that library research is an appropriate methodology when the primary focus is the exploration, critical analysis, and conceptual synthesis of previously published theories and scholarly ideas.

The data sources consisted of primary and secondary materials. The primary data were drawn from Matthew 18:21–35 in its original Greek text (*Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th edition [NA28]), together with

the Indonesian *Terjemahan Baru* and the *New International Version* (NIV), which served as comparative translations for the thematic-exegetical analysis.

The secondary data comprised three categories of literature. The first included international psychological studies on forgiveness interventions, particularly those examining Enright's forgiveness process model and its application to adolescent populations and bullying contexts. The second consisted of literature on Christian Religious Education and pastoral counseling, with particular attention to Indonesian peer-reviewed journals indexed in SINTA that discuss the role of CRE in bullying prevention and recovery. The third included systematic and pastoral theology textbooks, as well as exegetical studies examining Matthew 18:21–35 and the broader theme of forgiveness throughout the New Testament.

Two complementary analytical techniques were employed in this study. First, a thematic-exegetical analysis was conducted on Matthew 18:21–35. This analysis included an examination of the literary and historical contexts of the passage, grammatical and lexical analysis of key Greek expressions particularly the phrase *hebdomēkontakis hepta* (ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτὰ) and the formulation of theological interpretations based on the principles of historical-grammatical hermeneutics.

Second, interdisciplinary content analysis was employed to identify recurring themes, conceptual patterns, and points of convergence across three bodies of literature: Enright's forgiveness psychology, Christian Religious Education, and biblical-exegetical theology. This analytical process aimed to construct a coherent conceptual framework that integrates these three disciplines. The analysis was conducted iteratively through continuous interaction between the primary biblical text and the secondary literature, ensuring that theological interpretations were consistently cross-validated with relevant psychological and pedagogical findings.

The integrative framework proposed in this study is grounded in the principle that Christian Religious Education, Enright's forgiveness psychology, and biblical theology are neither hierarchical nor mutually reductive; rather, they function as complementary disciplines with distinct yet interconnected roles. Biblical theology, particularly the theological message of Matthew 18:21–35, serves as the normative foundation, providing the ultimate meaning and motivation for forgiveness as an act of faith in response to God's grace revealed through Christ. Enright's psychological model functions as the empirical-procedural framework, explaining how forgiveness unfolds as a psychological process through identifiable and intervention-oriented stages. Christian Religious Education serves as the pedagogical-practical framework, translating theological convictions and psychological insights into educational curricula, instructional strategies, and mentoring practices that can be implemented effectively among adolescents. The interaction of these three complementary functions is explored further in the Results and Discussion section, particularly in the presentation of the proposed integrative model for trauma recovery among Christian adolescent victims of bullying.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Empirical Profile of the Impact of Bullying and the Need for Recovery

Data reported by the Indonesian Education Monitoring Network (JPPI) indicate a dramatic increase in bullying cases, rising from 285 in 2023 to 573 in 2024. This trend suggests that bullying is no longer an isolated or sporadic occurrence but has become an increasingly systemic problem within Indonesia's educational environment. With bullying accounting for 31% of all reported cases of violence in educational settings, it has

emerged as one of the most prevalent forms of violence affecting Indonesian adolescents, surpassing several other forms of school violence that have traditionally received greater public attention.

The psychological consequences of bullying are complex and multidimensional. At the cognitive-affective level, victims frequently experience distorted self-perceptions manifested through diminished self-esteem and persistent negative beliefs about their personal worth. At the emotional level, chronic anxiety and symptoms resembling post-traumatic stress including hypervigilance, avoidance of social situations, and intrusive traumatic memories may gradually develop into enduring maladaptive patterns. At the socio-emotional level, bullying experienced during adolescence a developmental stage characterized by identity formation and relational development can disrupt interpersonal trust and impair the ability to establish healthy relationships in adulthood.

The complexity of these consequences demonstrates that the recovery needs of adolescent bullying victims cannot be adequately addressed through administrative or disciplinary measures alone. Rather, effective recovery requires interventions that directly engage victims' inner emotional experiences by helping adolescents process anger, resolve resentment, and rebuild trust in themselves and others. Within this context, forgiveness, understood as both a psychological construct and a theological virtue, offers a pathway to healing that addresses these deeper emotional and spiritual dimensions more comprehensively than conventional administrative approaches.

Psychological Dimension: Enright's Forgiveness Process Model

Robert D. Enright conceptualizes forgiveness as a psychological process consisting of four sequential phases: uncovering, decision, work, and deepening (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015). During the uncovering phase, individuals are encouraged to acknowledge and honestly confront the anger, emotional pain, and psychological consequences resulting from unjust treatment, rather than denying or suppressing these emotions. The decision phase represents a turning point in which individuals consciously choose to consider forgiveness as a viable response while recognizing that forgiveness is distinct from forgetting, excusing wrongdoing, or relinquishing the pursuit of justice. The work phase involves active cognitive and emotional engagement, during which individuals develop new perspectives toward the offender through cognitive reframing, empathy, and compassion, while simultaneously maintaining the offender's moral accountability for the harm committed. Finally, the deepening phase reflects the consolidation of the forgiveness process, enabling individuals to discover new meaning in their suffering and integrate the experience into broader personal growth and psychological maturity.

The empirical effectiveness of Enright's model has been consistently demonstrated across diverse populations and intervention settings. Baskin and Enright's (2004) meta-analysis of nine intervention studies found that process-based forgiveness interventions, delivered in either individual or group formats, produced substantially greater improvements in forgiveness and emotional well-being than decision-based interventions, which yielded no significant therapeutic effects. These findings were further supported by the systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by Akhtar and Barlow (2018), which confirmed the positive effects of forgiveness therapy on mental well-being across both clinical and non-clinical populations.

The relevance of this model for adolescent victims of bullying has been demonstrated in several empirical studies. Park et al. (2013) implemented a forgiveness intervention among 48 South Korean adolescent girls identified as aggressive victims and found that participants who received the forgiveness intervention demonstrated significantly greater improvements in psychological adjustment, behavioral functioning, and academic performance than those participating in an alternative skillstreaming program or those assigned to a no-

treatment control group. Similarly, Egan and Todorov (2009) argued that forgiveness serves as an effective coping strategy that helps students reduce the negative psychological consequences associated with bullying experiences.

A more nuanced perspective was provided by Watson, Todorov, and Rapee (2021), whose study of adolescent male bullying victims revealed that both forgiveness and revenge fantasies were associated with certain psychological outcomes, suggesting that recovery from bullying is a complex and non-linear process. Furthermore, the systematic review conducted by Quintana-Orts, Rey, and Worthington (2021) concluded that forgiveness consistently functions as a protective factor, reducing adolescents' risk of involvement in both traditional bullying and cyberbullying, whether as victims or perpetrators. Klatt and Enright (2009) further positioned forgiveness within the framework of Positive Youth Development, arguing that the capacity to forgive contributes significantly to positive character development during adolescence. Likewise, Menesini et al. (2018) demonstrated that the combination of forgiveness and supportive friendships protects adolescent victims of bullying from long-term emotional maladjustment.

Collectively, these findings provide strong empirical evidence that forgiveness should not be viewed merely as a moral or religious obligation but also as an evidence-based psychological intervention that promotes emotional recovery, resilience, and healthy developmental outcomes among adolescents who have experienced bullying. Consequently, Enright's forgiveness process model offers a robust psychological foundation for developing a holistic trauma recovery framework that can be integrated with Christian Religious Education and biblical theology.

Taken together, the accumulated empirical evidence demonstrates that Enright's forgiveness process model is not merely a philosophical or normative construct but an empirically validated intervention framework that is particularly relevant for the recovery of adolescent victims of bullying. Its structured and sequential progression from uncovering emotional wounds to discovering deeper meaning provides a procedural framework that can be effectively adapted to Christian pedagogical and pastoral contexts without compromising its empirical credibility.

Pedagogical Dimension: The Contribution of Christian Religious Education (CRE)

Christian Religious Education (CRE) plays a strategic role as a structured and continuous means of internalizing the values of love, justice, and forgiveness in the lives of adolescents. Unlike psychological interventions, which are typically episodic and confined to specific therapeutic periods, CRE operates within an ongoing educational curriculum that enables forgiveness to be taught, reflected upon, and practiced repeatedly throughout adolescents' formative years.

Tambunan and Arifianto (2025) emphasize that CRE plays a vital role in preventing bullying within schools by cultivating biblical values such as love, forgiveness, justice, and tolerance. These values contribute to the development of empathetic students who respect the dignity of others as bearers of the image of God (*imago Dei*). Their study argues that bullying often arises from deficiencies in moral awareness and healthy social relationships; consequently, Christian spirituality and biblical moral values provide a relevant foundation for both prevention and recovery.

Sitorus, Butarbutar, and Lumbanraja (2025) reinforce this perspective through their investigation of project-based Christian values in CRE instruction as a practical strategy for preventing bullying in vocational secondary schools. Their findings indicate that experiential and application-oriented approaches to Christian education are more effective in shaping students' observable behaviors than instruction focused solely on doctrinal

content. Complementing these findings, Arifianto and Santo (2020) discuss how the Christian faith should respond to bullying within the context of the digital era, arguing that emerging forms of aggression, such as cyberbullying, require pedagogical approaches that are both contextually relevant and responsive to contemporary challenges.

Within the broader framework of pastoral counseling which may be regarded as an extension of CRE within the life of the church Nego and Hulu (2020) specifically examine pastoral accompaniment as a means of facilitating recovery among adolescent victims of bullying. They emphasize the importance of empathetic pastoral caregivers who understand the complex psychological experiences of victims. Likewise, a study published in the *Journal of Christian Education and Theology* (2024) further develops this perspective by highlighting how pastoral counseling should address the profound sense of insecurity frequently experienced by adolescents following bullying, particularly as it affects self-confidence and the capacity to establish healthy social relationships.

Within the integrative framework proposed in this study, the primary contribution of Christian Religious Education lies in its function as a pedagogical bridge that translates abstract theological understandings of forgiveness into concrete educational practices. Through biblical instruction, teacher modeling, theological reflection, and continuous mentoring, adolescents are enabled to internalize forgiveness as a lived reality rather than merely an intellectual concept. Without such a pedagogical framework, both Enright's psychological model and the theological truths of Matthew 18:21–35 risk remaining abstract concepts with limited influence on adolescents' lived experiences.

Theological-Exegetical Dimension: An Exegetical Study of Matthew 18:21–35

Matthew 18:21–35 records Jesus' Parable of the Unforgiving Servant, presented in response to Peter's question regarding the number of times one should forgive a fellow believer who has sinned against him. From a literary perspective, this passage belongs to Jesus' discourse concerning the life of the community of disciples (Matthew 18), which addresses themes of forgiveness, church discipline, and reconciliation. Historically, the passage should be understood within the context of Jewish rabbinic tradition, which generally limited the obligation to forgive to three offenses. Consequently, Peter's proposal to forgive "up to seven times" (Matt. 18:21) already exceeded the prevailing expectations of his time.

Jesus' response introduces the key Greek expression ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτὰ (*hebdomekontakis hepta*) in Matthew 18:22, commonly translated as "seventy times seven" or, according to an alternative grammatical interpretation, "seventy-seven times." Regardless of the ongoing grammatical discussion concerning the precise numerical translation, scholarly consensus including Korengkeng (2020) and Lumbantobing and Siburian (2024) maintains that the primary intention of the expression is not to establish a literal numerical limit but to emphasize that Christian forgiveness is unlimited. Rhetorically, the phrase dismantles the logic of moral accounting, whereby forgiveness is measured according to quantifiable offenses, and replaces it with the principle of continual and boundless forgiveness.

The narrative structure of the parable further reinforces this theological emphasis. The first servant, who owed ten thousand talents an intentionally hyperbolic amount representing an impossible debt received complete forgiveness from his master solely because of the master's compassion (Matt. 18:27). Yet the same servant subsequently refused to forgive a fellow servant who owed him only one hundred denarii, a comparatively insignificant amount that could realistically be repaid. The dramatic contrast between these two debts forms the theological center of the parable: the forgiveness believers receive from God through Christ infinitely surpasses

any offense committed against them by others. Consequently, refusing to forgive fellow human beings constitutes a profound moral and spiritual contradiction.

Korengkeng (2020) concludes that the forgiveness portrayed by Jesus in this parable is unconditional, encompassing every form of sin and wrongdoing, and serves as a model for the contemporary church to embody Christ's forgiving character in everyday life. This understanding distinguishes biblical forgiveness from passive tolerance or the denial of wrongdoing. Rather, forgiveness is presented as an active decision to relinquish the desire for revenge while simultaneously acknowledging the reality and seriousness of the offense committed.

Similarly, Lumbantobing and Siburian (2024), through their focused exegetical study of Matthew 18:21–22, argue that Jesus' command to forgive remains profoundly relevant for contemporary Christian life. They emphasize that forgiveness is not an optional virtue for believers but the logical consequence of their identity as recipients of God's grace. Extending this application specifically to Christian youth, Sumiwi, Santo, and Lutuh (2023) conclude that Matthew 18:21–35 calls young believers to cultivate a continual readiness to forgive under all circumstances, demonstrating mercy and generosity as tangible expressions of authentic Christian faith.

As a comparative and contextually enriching perspective, the study by Hasibuan, Larosa, and Walean (2022) on the Epistle to Philemon offers additional theological insights into forgiveness within the context of wounded interpersonal relationships. Although the setting of Philemon differs from the parable in Matthew 18 being Paul's personal letter advocating Onesimus' forgiveness and restoration by Philemon the central theme remains the same: forgiveness as the pathway toward the restoration of broken relationships. This perspective reinforces a broader New Testament pattern, demonstrating that forgiveness is consistently understood not as a momentary emotional experience but as a relational process oriented toward inner healing and reconciliation.

From this exegetical analysis, three major theological themes emerge that are particularly relevant to the integrative model proposed in this study.

First, forgiveness is an active decision to restore relationships rather than a passive emotional state that develops naturally over time. This theological emphasis aligns remarkably with the decision phase of Enright's forgiveness process model.

Second, forgiveness is without quantitative limits, as emphasized by the Greek expression *ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτὰ* (*hebdomekontakis hepta*). This expression calls believers to maintain an ongoing willingness to forgive whenever emotional wounds and anger resurface. Such a perspective closely parallels the cyclical nature of trauma recovery recognized in clinical psychology, where healing often requires repeated engagement rather than a single, definitive event.

Third, and most fundamentally, human forgiveness toward others is understood as a response of faith to God's prior forgiveness in Christ. Accordingly, the motivation for forgiving does not originate primarily from one's own moral strength but from the transformative experience of having already received divine grace. This theological foundation represents a distinctive dimension that is absent from any secular psychological framework, including Enright's otherwise comprehensive forgiveness model.

Synthesis: An Integrative Three-Dimensional Model

Building upon the three dimensions discussed above, this study proposes an integrative model in which Christian Religious Education (CRE), Enright's forgiveness psychology, and biblical theology function as three complementary dimensions that mutually reinforce one another in facilitating trauma recovery among Christian

adolescents who have experienced bullying. Conceptually, this model may be visualized as three overlapping circles, with their intersection representing forgiveness-based trauma recovery.

At the foundational level, biblical theology particularly the theological message of Matthew 18:21–35 provides the ultimate rationale for why adolescent victims of bullying are both called and empowered to forgive. Forgiveness is understood not merely as compliance with an external moral obligation but as a response to the grace of God's forgiveness already received through Christ. This theological foundation offers a deeper and more enduring source of motivation than purely psychological objectives, such as reducing anxiety or improving mental health, because it is rooted in the adolescent's spiritual identity as a recipient of divine grace rather than in calculations of personal benefit.

At the process level, Enright's four-phase model uncovering, decision, work, and deepening provides an empirically validated procedural framework explaining how forgiveness unfolds psychologically. The conceptual correspondence between the decision phase and the emphasis of Matthew 18:21–35 on forgiveness as an intentional act of the will demonstrates that these two frameworks, despite emerging from different academic traditions, converge on a crucial insight: forgiveness is not a passive occurrence but a deliberate and volitional act. Likewise, the biblical emphasis on the limitless nature of forgiveness expressed through ἑβδομηκοντάκις ἑπτὰ finds its psychological counterpart in Enright's deepening phase, in which forgiveness continues to mature over time rather than being completed in a single moment.

At the practical level, Christian Religious Education functions as the pedagogical vehicle that translates both the theological and psychological dimensions into concrete educational practices, instructional strategies, and pastoral mentoring for adolescents. CRE can adopt Enright's sequential model as a methodological framework for educational and pastoral accompaniment while continually directing each stage toward the deeper theological meaning of forgiveness articulated in Matthew 18:21–35. Consequently, adolescents who have experienced bullying and participate in CRE programs or pastoral counseling are encouraged not merely to "forget" or "let go" emotionally but to engage in a structured, evidence-informed, and spiritually meaningful process of healing.

The implications of this integrative model for Christian adolescents who have experienced bullying are substantial. It offers a pathway toward recovery that enables them to break free from cycles of resentment and bitterness, which might otherwise become deeply entrenched and damage future interpersonal relationships. Purba (2019) argues that the virtue of forgiveness functions as a means of breaking the chain of enmity, thereby preventing recurring cycles of hostility, retaliation, and violence that can persist across generations and interpersonal relationships.

Within the framework of the proposed integrative model, however, recovery extends beyond merely interrupting these destructive cycles. It progresses toward what trauma psychology identifies as post-traumatic growth, namely, positive psychological transformation resulting from the individual's struggle with traumatic experiences. In the context of Christian adolescents, this process acquires a uniquely theological dimension. It involves not only secular psychological growth but also faith-based post-traumatic growth, whereby the experience of suffering followed by forgiveness becomes a means of deepening one's relationship with God and fostering greater Christlike character. In this way, forgiveness functions simultaneously as a psychologically restorative process and as a spiritually formative journey that contributes to holistic healing and Christian discipleship.

Practical Implications

The integrative model developed in this study has several practical implications that can be applied across three primary domains. First, for the development of Christian Religious Education (CRE) curricula in Christian schools, the model highlights the need for instructional modules that explicitly integrate the biblical theology of forgiveness grounded in Matthew 18:21–35 and other relevant scriptural passages with Enright's procedural framework of forgiveness psychology. Such an approach enables students not only to understand why they are called to forgive from a theological perspective but also how the process of forgiveness unfolds in a realistic and gradual manner. Importantly, it affirms that emotions such as anger, emotional pain, and resentment are legitimate components of the healing process rather than feelings that should be suppressed or denied.

Second, for pastoral counseling within the church, the proposed model provides a structured framework for accompanying adolescent victims of bullying by integrating sensitivity to the psychological dynamics of trauma as conceptualized in Enright's four-phase model with a robust theological understanding of adolescents' identity as recipients of God's grace. This integrated approach enables pastoral counselors to avoid two equally problematic extremes. On the one hand, it guards against spiritual bypassing, in which individuals are encouraged to forgive prematurely without sufficient space to process their emotional wounds in healthy ways. On the other hand, it avoids an approach that focuses exclusively on psychological processing while neglecting to direct adolescents toward the deeper hope, meaning, and spiritual resources found in Christian theology.

Third, this study recommends the development of structured forgiveness programs within Christian schools and churches. Such programs should adapt Enright's sequential forgiveness process into small-group interventions or individual mentoring for adolescent victims of bullying while employing Matthew 18:21–35 as the theological framework for reflection at each stage of the recovery process. Ideally, these programs should involve close collaboration among Christian Religious Education teachers, school or church counselors, and parents to ensure that adolescents receive consistent, holistic, and sustained support throughout their journey of recovery from the psychological consequences of bullying.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that an integrative model combining Christian Religious Education (CRE), Enright's forgiveness process psychology, and the biblical theology of Matthew 18:21–35 provides a conceptually robust framework for addressing the trauma recovery needs of adolescent victims of bullying in a holistic manner, encompassing cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. The exegetical analysis of Matthew 18:21–35 demonstrates that biblical forgiveness is an active and ongoing decision rooted in God's grace, whereas Enright's forgiveness process model offers an empirically grounded framework explaining how this decision is enacted psychologically through the four sequential phases of uncovering, decision, work, and deepening. Within this integrative framework, Christian Religious Education serves as the pedagogical bridge that translates these theological and psychological dimensions into practical educational and pastoral applications for adolescents.

The original contribution of this study lies in its role as a conceptual bridge between the psychology of forgiveness, which has largely developed within the Western secular tradition, and the theological resources of Christianity within the context of Christian Religious Education and pastoral counseling in Indonesia. Unlike previous studies that have generally examined these three domains independently, the present study offers an explicit integrative framework that identifies the principal points of conceptual convergence between psychological theory and biblical theology while positioning Christian Religious Education as the pedagogical

medium through which these complementary perspectives can be translated into practical ministry and educational practice.

Several limitations should be acknowledged. As a library research study, the proposed integrative model remains conceptual and theoretical and has not yet been empirically tested among Christian adolescents who have experienced bullying in Indonesia. Consequently, the practical effectiveness of the model in facilitating trauma recovery, including the potential influence of cultural factors and denominational differences on its implementation, requires further empirical investigation.

In light of these limitations, future research employing empirical and experimental methodologies is strongly recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed integrative model among Christian adolescent victims of bullying across diverse educational and ecclesiastical contexts in Indonesia. Future studies may include quasi-experimental intervention designs that assess changes in anxiety, self-esteem, and forgiveness before and after participation in a structured forgiveness program based on the proposed model. In addition, qualitative phenomenological studies could explore adolescents' lived experiences of engaging in forgiveness-based trauma recovery, thereby providing deeper insight into the psychological and spiritual processes through which healing occurs.

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