

Why Should I Forgive?

Matthew 18:21-35

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- Forgiveness is not simple, nor easy.
- The closer the relationship, the harder at times it is to forgive, especially a repeat offender.

Why Should I Forgive?

A. We should FORGIVE OTHERS because WE'VE BEEN FORGIVEN MUCH!

1. **Christ's teaching on confronting someone who has sinned against you.**
 - Matthew 18:15-18-- *"Go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector."*
2. **Peter's question on how many times to forgive a repeat offender.**
 - Matthew 18:21-- *"Then Peter came to Him and said, 'Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?'"*
3. **Jesus Statement: There is NO Statutes of Limitations on the number of times to forgive.**
 - a. Current Jewish thought; *"Three strikes and you are out"* based on Amos 2:6
 - Amos 2:6-- *"For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away its punishment."*
 - b. Peter's Generous Offer: Seven times, perhaps based on Matthew 5:20
 - Matthew 5:20-- *"Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven."*
 - c. Jesus' Unlimited Offer: Seven times Seventy.
 - Matthew 18:22-- *"Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven."*
 - Luke 17:3-4-- *"If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."*
4. **Jesus Story: Parable of the King and the Two Servants**
 - a. **The King and the Servant who owed him an astronomical amount of money**
 - Matthew 18:23-27-- *"Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children, and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt."*
 - 1) The servant owed "ten thousand talents". Perspective on the size of the debt.
 - 2) Common practice of debtor's prison and selling family and possessions to pay off debts
 - 3) The King out of compassion and pity forgives this enormous debt.
 - Matthew 18:26 -- *"Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all."*
 - Matthew 18:27 -- *"Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt."*
 - b. **The Forgiven Servant harsh treatment of a fellow servant who owed him a little money**
 - Matthew 18:28-30-- *"But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid his hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him in prison till he should pay the debt."*

- c. **The response of the King when he heard of the harsh treatment by the forgiven servant.**
 - Matthew 18:31-35-- *"So, when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So, My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."*
 - d. **Punchline: We should forgive others because we've been forgiven much.**
 - Matthew 18:32-33-- *"I forgave you all the debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?"*
5. **Jesus' Story Applied:**
- a. We struggle with forgiving others when we focus on our rights that have been violated or abused.
 - b. We are able to forgive even a repeat offender when we focus on the wrongs for which we have been forgiven by God.
 - Ephesians 1:7-- *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace."*

B. We should FORGIVE OTHERS in order to be FORGIVEN BY GOD. – Matthew 18:35

1. **The Principle as taught by Jesus.**
 - Matthew 6:12 -- *"forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"*
 - Matthew 6:14-15-- *"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."*
 - Luke 6:37 -- *"Forgive and you will be forgiven."*
2. **Portrayed in Jesus' Story**
 - Matthew 18:34-35 -- *"And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So, My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."*
3. **Possible Objection; Is God's Forgiveness Conditional?**
 - a. Distinction between "Judicial Forgiveness" and "Familial Forgiveness"
 - 1) Before salvation, we stood before God as the JUDGE in need of JUDICIAL FORGIVENESS.
 - John 3:18-- *"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*
 - Ephesians 2:8-9 -- *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast."*
 - 2) After salvation, a new familial relationship with God as our FATHER is established. In this Father-son relationship, when we sin, we need familial forgiveness to restore the enjoyment of the relationship with the Father.
 - 1 John 1:9 -- *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*
 - 3) Contrast between Judicial and Familial Forgiveness
 - b. Our unwillingness to forgive erects an invisible wall between us and the Lord with dire spiritual consequences.

C. We should FORGIVE OTHERS in order to FREE GOD to WORK in the OFFENDER

1. **Unforgiveness can be detrimental to the repentant offender.**
 - a. Case of the Repentant Brother in 2 Corinthians 2.
 - 2 Corinthians 2: 6-7 -- *"This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man, so that on the contrary, you ought rather to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow."*
 - b. Case of Absalom, David's son in 2 Samuel 13-14
2. **Forgiving others frees God to work in the offender.**