



## Lesson #9: How Many Times Should I Forgive? (Matthew 18:21)

Forgiveness, for Jesus, is not just a quantifiable event. It is a quality; a way of being, a way of living, of loving, of relating, of thinking and seeing. **Forgiveness is nothing less than the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_.**

While we can acknowledge the wonder of forgiveness we still struggle to forgive. As humans we stand at a difficult, seemingly impossible place. We stand at the intersection between our \_\_\_\_\_ and God's \_\_\_\_\_. Look at your own life and you will find broken promises, hurt feelings, harsh words, and physical and emotional wounds. Every one of us could tell stories of being hurt or victimized by some one. Beneath this pain, the wounds, and the losses, lies the question of forgiveness.

The only problem with forgiveness is that we have a lot of questions about it. We have difficulty fitting the pieces of the forgiveness puzzle together. Peter asks some question about forgiveness in this text because he wanted to know about it. These questions help us understand what biblical forgiveness is all about.

### WHAT ABOUT FORGIVENESS AND \_\_\_\_\_? (18:21-22)

Teaching “forgive and \_\_\_\_\_” might be the biggest ideological nonsense on the topic of forgiveness that is currently being taught. So what’s the point then? If we can’t \_\_\_\_\_ how do we forgive? Peter seems to be thinking the same thing so he asks his questions in verse 21.

- A. Forgiveness is not about \_\_\_\_\_**  
Peter may have expected to receive praise from the Lord Jesus for his bigheartedness His answer “*till seven times*” was more than \_\_\_\_\_ what the Rabbis taught. But Jesus says not 7x, but seventy times seven. Jesus is not saying that we are to actually count up to 490. No, forgiveness is not a matter of \_\_\_\_\_. Forgiveness is a matter of \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. Forgiveness is about \_\_\_\_\_ the focus**  
To keep on forgiving is a God-like characteristic. The only way forward in forgiveness is placing your focus solely on God. Forgiving others is a vital characteristic of a disciple of Christ who truly \_\_\_\_\_ and is \_\_\_\_\_ by the awesome forgiveness God has demonstrated to us.

### WHAT ABOUT FORGIVENESS AND \_\_\_\_\_? (18:23-30)

The parable Jesus uses in these next few verses illustrates the stark difference between true and false forgiveness. One feeds off emotions and feelings while the other feeds off a \_\_\_\_\_ in God.

- A. True forgiveness \_\_\_\_\_ grace (v. 23-27)**  
In this story a king did an audit and found that one of his servants owed him 10,000 talents. That was an incomprehensible debt. You see, a talent was the largest weight they used in their currency in that day, and 10,000 was the largest number that they used in the language. A common laborer would need to work \_\_\_\_\_ years for \_\_\_\_\_ talents. Yet, in spite of this debt the king forgives the man and asks for nothing in return.
- B. False forgiveness \_\_\_\_\_ revenge (v. 28-30)**  
Suddenly this story takes an ugly turn. The debtor from the first scene goes to his fellow servant that owes him 100 denari. Now even though that debt was no small sum of money, it was insignificant compared to what the king had just forgiven him. In fact, it was \_\_\_\_\_ times less! The fellow servant asks for patience using the same words the debtor to the king had used earlier. But rather than offering forgiveness he exacts revenge.

### WHAT ABOUT FORGIVENESS AND \_\_\_\_\_? (18:30-35)

Once saved our fellowship with God has forever been changed. If you have been forgiven it ought to change your whole outlook on fellowship.

- A. \_\_\_\_\_ brings us close to God**  
God has torn up the pages of our debts. So for us not to forgive those who wrong us is quite \_\_\_\_\_. Forgiveness does not originate in us. It begins with \_\_\_\_\_. That’s what the servant who refused to forgive didn’t understand. It was not about him. It’s about God. How can we pretend to be close to God and still refuse to forgive?
- B. \_\_\_\_\_ pushes us away from God**  
If the parable ended in verse 30, the twist on the story line of the parable would give an accurate depiction of the sinfulness of man, but it would not answer Peter’s question. Peter might even think that he was being merciful in being willing to forgive 7x compared to the first servant that did not forgive even once. But Jesus reveals the final consequences of being unforgiving. Unforgiveness will be \_\_\_\_\_. The thing about an unforgiving heart is that you don’t hurt the one you aren’t forgiving; you are just hurting \_\_\_\_\_.

### Concluding Thoughts

Simply put, the lesson from this parable is this: **Prompted by gratitude for our own \_\_\_\_\_, we must always be willing to \_\_\_\_\_ whoever has sinned against us.** Even if that person has sinned against you 100 times, can you hold a grudge against them when you realize that God has forgiven you thousands of times in your life?