

Unlimited Forgiveness

Do you find it easier to forgive adults or children? How do we respond when we are on the wrong end of someone else's irresponsible behavior? After we've been wronged, how do we respond when the other party could not care less how much — or how deeply — they have hurt us? What can we learn from Matthew 18:21-22 that will help answer these questions? How can we do better, in the realm of forgiveness, so we can do what Jesus did?

I. When we Forgive, We are at our Best

- A. Proverbs 19:11 NASB: *...it is his **glory** to overlook an offense.*
- B. Ephesians 4:32: *forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you **in Christ**.*
- C. Colossians 3:13: *Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive.*

II. Matthew 18.21 - Peter's Question

- A. Matthew 18:21: *Then Peter approached him and asked, "Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? As many as **seven** times?"*
- B. It is hard for most of us, to find it within ourselves to forgive one time.
 1. How could Stephan say, Acts 7:60: **do not hold** this sin against them.
 2. How could Jesus say, Luke 23:34: *Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.*

III. Matthew 18.22 - How Far Forgiveness Goes

- A. Matthew 18:22: *I tell you, not as many as seven, Jesus replied, but **seventy** times seven.*
 1. Stop counting and start forgiving.
 2. Luke 17:4: *if he sins against you seven times in a day, and comes back to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him.* To this the disciples responded... **Increase** our faith.

IV. Why We Forgive

- A. **Because of Jesus' example** - Ephesians 4:32: *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving one another, just as God also forgave you in Christ.*
- B. **Because it is part of our new character** - 2 Peter 1:7: *brotherly affection with **love**.*
- C. **Because it frees us from roots of bitterness** - Hebrews 12:15: *Make sure that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no **root of bitterness** springs up, causing trouble and defiling many.*
- D. **Because it delivers us from the devices of Satan** - 2 Corinthians 2:7-10:
 1. 2.7 - *forgive and comfort him; 2.8 - reaffirm your love to him.*
 2. 2.11 - *Why? It is for your benefit in the presence of Christ, so that we may not be taken advantage of by Satan. For we are not ignorant of his schemes.*
- E. **Because without it, we will not be forgiven** - Matthew 6:14: *For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will **forgive** you as well.*
- F. **Because without it, my worship will be ineffective** - Mark 11:25-26: *And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your **wrongdoing**.* Reconciliation ... then worship.

V. As We Close...

- A. Fill your heart with forgiveness.
- B. Do what is in your power to rectify the situation.
- C. Turn the matter over to God.
- D. Trust God to compensate you for your losses.
- E. Let God deal with those who refuse to take responsibility for how they wronged you.
- F. Embrace your service to the king.