

- What role does forgiveness play in your life?

Matthew 18:21-35

²¹Then Peter came and said to him, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. ²³“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Genesis 50:15-21

¹⁵Realizing that their father was dead, Joseph’s brothers said, “What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?” ¹⁶So they approached Joseph, saying, “Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷‘Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.’ Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father.” Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, “We are here as your slaves.” ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, “Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones.” In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

- What are you hearing in this text?
- What is this parable about?
- What is forgiveness?
 - Is there such a thing as forgive and forget?
- Does forgiveness come easy to you?
 - Is it easier to ask forgiveness or grant it? Why do you think?
- In some translations, it isn't 77 but instead 70x7. Why would Jesus want us to forgive this much?
 - What difference does it make?
- Who is forgiveness for?
 - What does forgiveness do to us?
 - What can it do for the other person?
- What can happen if we withheld forgiveness?
- Have you ever withheld forgiveness and never reentered the relationship?
- Can we ask forgiveness of God if we hold it from others? Tell me more.
- Does forgiving mean we must remain in community with person we forgave? Why or why not?
- Has there ever been someone who did something so grievous they didn't deserve forgiveness?
- I think it's safe to say we've all had to ask truly ask and grant forgiveness at least once in our lives. How did those times impact your relationship and understanding of forgiveness?
- What steps can you take to cultivate a more forgiving attitude in your daily life?
 - How can you extend forgiveness to those who may have wronged you?