



Living the Gift of Forgiveness



Explore forgiveness through the Gospels, focusing on Matthew 18:21–35, learning to give freely what we have graciously received.

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Introduction

Forgiveness is a cornerstone of Christian life, and nowhere is this more powerfully illustrated than in the teachings of Jesus within the Gospels. The story of the Unforgiving Servant in *Matthew 18:21–35* challenges us to consider the depth and breadth of God's mercy—and how we are called to extend that mercy to others. Forgiveness, as Jesus teaches, isn't some occasional act; it is a daily choice and a gift that transforms our hearts and relationships.

This three-day study will take you through the Gospel's message of grace and radical forgiveness. We will begin by exploring the question Peter posed to Jesus about how many times we should forgive, setting the stage for a deeper understanding of the nature of mercy. On the second day, we will reflect closely on the parable itself, seeing how the massive debt forgiven by the master illustrates God's immeasurable compassion. Finally, we will focus on the practical implications of forgiving others freely, as we've been forgiven, allowing this truth to reshape our lives and communities.

As you journey through this study, take time to meditate on the amazing grace God has shown you and open your heart to extend that grace to others. Forgiveness is not just releasing others from their debts; it is freeing your own heart to live with peace and love. Let's embrace forgiveness as the precious gift it is—a gift we give as freely as we have received it from Christ. 🙏❤️





Day 1: The Call to Forgive Without Limit



Day 1: 🕊️ The Call to Forgive Without Limit

Your Verse

Matthew 18:21–22 NIV - "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'"

Supporting Scriptures

- *Colossians 3:13 - "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."*
- *Ephesians 4:32 - "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."*



Devotional: Unlimited Forgiveness: A Call to Grace

Forgiveness is a revolutionary act. When Peter asks Jesus how many times to forgive, his question reflects common human limits on grace and mercy. Seven times seemed generous, yet Jesus surprises him—and us—by multiplying forgiveness beyond a finite number, urging a boundless spirit of forgiveness: "seventy-seven times" or "seventy times seven." This isn't about counting offenses but about cultivating a heart that forgives continually and unconditionally.

Why does Jesus emphasize unlimited forgiveness? Partly, it's because God's mercy toward us is limitless. We often fall short, and yet God freely forgives, inviting us to forgive in turn. Forgiving becomes less about the offender and more about reflecting God's character, liberating ourselves from bitterness, and restoring broken relationships.

Our challenge today is to ask: How often do I withhold forgiveness? How can I grow into a posture of grace that mirrors what Jesus teaches? Reflect on the freedom possible when we choose to forgive as God forgives—without record-keeping or limits.



Reflect and Apply

1. What barriers do I place on forgiveness, and why?

2. How does remembering God's unlimited forgiveness towards me inspire my willingness to forgive others?

3. In what ways have I experienced freedom through forgiving or being forgiven?



Journaling Prompts

1. Write about a time when forgiving someone brought you peace.

2. List situations where you find it hardest to forgive and why.

3. How can you practice forgiving others more freely starting today?



Day 1: 🕊️ The Call to Forgive Without Limit

Prayer for Today


Lord, thank You for Your merciful love that knows no bounds. Help me embrace a heart of forgiveness that reflects Your grace. Teach me to forgive not just seven times, but without end, releasing burdens and welcoming peace. Strengthen me to be an instrument of Your mercy in every relationship. *Amen.* 🙏💖😊😮





Day 2: The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant



Day 2:  The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

Your Verse

Matthew 18:23–27 NIV – "...because he owed him ten thousand bags of gold, the king ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. The servant fell on his knees... 'Be patient with me, and I will pay back everything.' The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go."

Supporting Scriptures

- *Luke 7:47 – "Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."*
- *Psalms 103:12 – "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."*



Devotional: Mercy Received, Mercy Given

The parable of the Unforgiving Servant vividly paints the tension between mercy given and mercy withheld. The servant owed an astronomical debt—something impossible to repay. Yet his master's compassion leads him to cancel the entire debt, a powerful image of God's forgiveness toward us. How often does God forgive our countless failings? Fully, freely, and without expectation of repayment.

However, the story doesn't end there. The forgiven servant then refuses to extend the same mercy to a fellow servant who owes him a small amount. This stark contrast exposes the hypocrisy in accepting grace but being unwilling to extend it. Jesus warns that our hold on mercy toward others reflects our true understanding of God's mercy toward us.

This parable urges us to: Recognize the immense grace we've been granted and to pass that grace forward. Forgiveness is not a favor but a reflection of God's unstoppable love that transforms us from within. What debts do we need to release today? How can we be agents of God's mercy in a world in need of forgiveness?



Reflect and Apply

1. How does realizing the size of my debt to God change my view on forgiving others?

2. In what ways have I been like the unforgiving servant?

3. What steps can I take to show mercy to those who have wronged me?



Journaling Prompts

1. Write about a time when receiving forgiveness deeply affected your life.

2. Describe a situation where you struggled to forgive someone and why.

3. List practical ways you can show mercy in your daily interactions.



Day 2: 📖 The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

Prayer for Today

Gracious Father, thank You for the overwhelming forgiveness You pour into my life. Help me to never take Your mercy for granted but to allow it to soften my heart toward others. Teach me to forgive as I have been forgiven and to be patient and compassionate toward those who hurt me. May Your love flow through me freely, transforming broken relationships. *Amen.* ✨ 🙏 🩹 🙏





Day 3: Embracing Forgiveness as a Lifestyle



Day 3: 🎯 Embracing Forgiveness as a Lifestyle

Your Verse

Matthew 18:34–35 NIV – "In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Supporting Scriptures

- *Mark 11:25 – "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."*
- *2 Corinthians 2:7 – "Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow."*



Devotional: Forgiveness: A Heartfelt Lifestyle Commitment

Forgiveness is not optional; it is essential to spiritual life. The conclusion of the parable is sobering: refusing to forgive has consequences that reflect a hardened heart. Jesus emphasizes that forgiving "from your heart" is vital, for God's forgiveness of us is tied to our willingness to forgive others.

This day challenges us to move beyond surface-level forgiveness—beyond simply saying the words or checking a box—to truly releasing offenses in our hearts. Forgiveness is a lifestyle, a continual daily commitment that frees both the forgiver and the forgiven.

Living a life marked by forgiveness transforms relationships and communities. Bitterness and resentment can shatter peace, but forgiveness restores harmony and reflects God's kingdom values. As you close this study, consider how you can nurture a forgiving spirit continually and entrust your struggles to God's sustaining grace.



Reflect and Apply

1. What does forgiving from the heart mean for me personally?

2. Are there any grudges or resentments I need to release today?

3. How can a forgiving heart influence those around me and reflect God's kingdom?



Journaling Prompts

1. Write a prayer asking God to help you forgive fully and sincerely.

2. Describe the impact forgiveness has had in your spiritual journey.

3. Identify relationships where you can practice deeper forgiveness and peace.



Day 3: 🌀 Embracing Forgiveness as a Lifestyle

Prayer for Today

Dear Jesus, teach me to forgive from the heart, as You have forgiven me. Help me make forgiveness a daily habit that frees my soul and restores my relationships. Fill me with Your love so that bitterness has no place in my heart. May I be a reflection of Your grace to everyone I meet. *Amen.* 🙏❤️❤️





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