

1. How do you explain forgiveness to a child?

In this parable Jesus is teaching us about sin and forgiveness. It is not difficult to tell who the characters are intended to represent. The king or master is representative of God. The servant, represents an average person.

2. In the parable, what was the plea of the man heavily in debt (vs. 26)?



The man's proposal is both ridiculous and sad. One scholar claims that a single silver talent represented 6,000 days' worth of wages for an average Palestinian worker (that's twenty-seven years of work!). So, ten thousand talents would be the equivalent of sixty million days wages (working for 164,383.5 years). And that's if we're talking about talents of *silver*. It would be far more if Jesus meant talents of *gold*!

3. What's Jesus point? What debt do we owe God because of our failure to properly love and honor him?

We are either naïve, ignorant, or prideful to think *we* can somehow erase the debt we owe God. Spiritually speaking, the truth is that we keep dishonoring God *and adding to our debt!* Jesus' point is that our debt to God is far greater than we could ever pay back or even comprehend. Read verse 27 again.

4. What does the master or the king do for the man?

Read Colossians 2:13-14.

5. How – not in the parable, but in the real world – is God able to cancel the enormous spiritual debts of sinful people?

The man in the parable asked for time. “Be patient!” he cried. He got infinitely more than that. He got the slate wiped clean, the king purged the books, expunged the records.

How did the king respond when he heard about what the forgiven man had done?

5. Read Matthew 18:34-35 and James 2:13. What’s the warning for those who have experienced God’s forgiveness but are unwilling to extend such mercy to others?

Summary of the Text

Relationships between sinful people are often marred by sinful words and actions, some recurring over and over again. In every marriage, in every family, in every friendship, Christians will be faced with the situation in which forgiveness is requested of them – again. We too may wonder with Peter whether our forgiveness toward others has limits. [Furthermore,] our own [sinful] nature leads us to want to limit forgiveness, [as well].”

That is just typical of our sinful nature is it not? The old Adam, that is our sinful nature, will tend to limit forgiveness to others, while Jesus on the other hand says that it is limitless. The reason why this is true is that our sinful flesh is all about justice and keeping score of other people’s wrongs towards us, but rarely wants justice for ourselves. That is the way that it is with the old Adam. We want to be let off the hook, but rarely apply that same standard to others. We don’t want to pay our debts, but expect others to pay theirs. We want free handouts but expect others to dig themselves out of their own graves. Keep theses in mind:

- Forgiveness is not merely attempting to forget the wounds, sin, and pain that have been done to you as if they never happened, though this is a possibility.
- Forgiveness is also not a dismissal of someone’s sin towards you, as if this sin was not a series offense.
- Forgiveness is also not turning a blind eye towards someone.
- Forgiveness it is not giving someone the silent treatment like some immature schoolgirl.
- Forgiveness is not getting someone out of trouble with the law scot-free, as they say.
- Forgiveness is not something that the sinful nature can do or wants to do.

- Rather, forgiveness is an action that is done by you through the leading of the Holy Spirit by the Gospel. It is releasing someone from your vengeance, your plans of revenge, and your retaliation agendas.

Frankly, even though it is tremendously important for others to be forgiven by you, this granting of forgiveness is just as important for you as it is for them.

Questions to consider

How are we to forgive the “unforgivable”?

What about reconciliation and restoration?

Is it possible to “forgive and forget”? Is it necessary to forget?

Questions from last week?

Here is a question from last week. I was unable to put the answer into words and accompany them with a biblical basis. Notes from a book by Dr. Roger Barrier gives us a summary that I believe will help to answer the questions “will God forgive you if you do not forgive others (based on Matthew 6:14-16)? or “If I don't forgive others, does that mean my sins are not forgiven?”

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:19). Makes reference to our daily fellowship with Christ and not our eternal relationship with Christ. When we receive Christ into our lives God immediately becomes our father.

The Bible makes it quite clear that our salvation has nothing to do with our works; but instead, God’s forgiveness of our sins is based totally on the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16).

“He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2).

“This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins” (1 John 4:10).

Receiving comfort, understanding the truth and reaching the freedom of forgiveness are seldom simple, one-moment endeavors. A long time may be needed to completely follow and experience Jesus' model of forgiveness.

Many Christians have difficulty with forgiveness because they struggle to understand what forgiveness is and isn't.

- First, forgiving does not mean that we let those who hurt us "off the hook." When we forgive, we may let them off our "hook," but they are still on God's "hook"! Remember the Lord says, "Vengeance is mine." So, let Him do His work. He dispenses justice in His own time.
- Second, forgiving is not a sign that we're weak. Forgiveness is a courageous act that integrates the grace, kindness, and compassion of Christ.
- Third, forgiving does not mean that we forget what they did to us. By God's grace we can forgive them even though we may never forget what they did to us.
- Fourth, forgiving doesn't mean that we restore the relationship with the one, or ones, who hurt us — as if nothing ever happened.
 - Something did happen.
 - Trust was broken.
 - Circumstances have changed.
 - Abuse occurred.

If the one who hurt us is repentant, we may choose to establish boundaries, giving the offender — over a period of time — the opportunity to regain our trust.

- Fifth, you really do want to forgive before deep bitterness and resentment become ingrained.
- Sixth, it's not possible to be at peace with all people (Romans 12:7). Unfortunately, some relationships just will not work out. It is OK to leave them behind and go on with others.

Finally, you know that you have forgiven them when you don't want to hurt them anymore.

