



Forgiveness is something we all struggle with at times. We don't want to forgive because the offender hasn't asked for forgiveness. We don't want to forgive because the offender has done the same thing to us before. We don't want to forgive because that means the offender would be getting away with the offense. What Jesus teaches about forgiveness is what we most often don't want to do. But His ways are higher than your ways. They are far better. Let's take a look at a lesson on forgiveness and doing it His way.

Read Matthew 18:21–35.

1. Jesus had just finished talking to the disciples about dealing with a sinning brother, which, in turn, seemed to trigger a question by Peter. What did he ask the Lord?
 - a. What was Jesus' response to Peter's question?

 - b. What point was Jesus making to Peter and to the disciples and, of course, to us?

2. Jesus then told a parable to illustrate His point. To what did Jesus' liken the kingdom of heaven in this parable?

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a. What would you say the following represent in this parable?

- King

- Servants

- Debt

b. In your own words, explain what Jesus was teaching in this parable.

3. One talent was a very large sum of money. Ten thousand talents was a debt that would have been unpayable by a servant. What was the master's command regarding the debtor and making restitution for his debt?

- a. How did the servant respond?

- b. Describe the reaction of the master to his servant's request.

4. Review the following verses and explain what you discover about compassion.
 - Zechariah 7:9

 - 1 Peter 3:8

 - Ephesians 4:32

5. Explain what happened between the master and the servant who owed him a great debt.

CHALLENGE: Find a biblical example where forgiveness was extended when it was not deserved. To what would you attribute the offended person's ability to forgive those who had mistreated him? What was the reaction of those who were forgiven? How did this example of obedience to God's command to forgive minister to you?

6. Reading Matthew 18:28, we find the forgiven servant in a position to extend the same mercy that was shown to him by the king. How did the forgiven servant act toward the servant who was in debt to him?
 - a. In verse 29, we see the fellow servant using the exact same plea and promise that resulted in mercy and compassion being extended to the servant who owed the greater debt. What punishment did the fellow servant receive?

- b. How do you feel about what the forgiven servant did to his fellow servant?
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- 7. While we may not throw our fellow servants into prison, we do have our own ways of demanding payment. What are some ways we exact payment from those who have offended us or “owe us”?
 - a. Compare your debt to God to the debt of someone who has offended you. How does it compare?
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- 8. Colossians 3:13 says that “even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” Describe how Christ has forgiven you. Challenge: Use Scripture to support your answer.

a. What did the master expect of the servant?

11. Record Jesus' conclusion based on this parable as found in Matthew 18:35.

a. What do we learn from the following verses?

- Matthew 6:12

- Matthew 6:14–15

- Mark 11:25–26

- Luke 6:37

- Luke 17:3–4

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PERSONAL: Have you ever offended someone and when you apologized, that person refused to forgive you? How did that make you feel? Is there someone to whom you have refused to extend forgiveness? If so, what do you need to do to make things right?

*To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable
because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you.*

--C. S. Lewis

