

COVID-19 PARENTS AND STUDENTS BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

STUDENTS →

BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE.

Session 3

DEALING WITH MESSY RELATIONSHIPS

Forgive // Matthew 18:21-28,32-33



ONE SHEET

THE POINT: Matthew 18:21-28,32-33

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

A lot of things come at a high price, but often times they're worth it. Forgiveness is one of those things. It can be very costly, but the price of forgiveness is a great investment in any relationship. In order for our friendships, families, and churches to be healthy, forgiveness is absolutely necessary. After all, they're all made up of people, and people are imperfect. Therefore, we're going to do things that bother, offend, and injure one another. Without forgiveness, we'd all be alone, but God has designed us to live in relationships with others. And relationships grow when we let go of a hurt or a critical remark.

▶ **When has it cost you a lot to fix something?**

MATTHEW 18:21-22

We're going to look at a parable Jesus told about forgiveness, which was His response to a curious question Peter asked. Peter offered his own answer to the question. He filled in the blank with the number seven, the number of completeness. The rabbis of that day challenged people to overlook an offense up to three times—three strikes and you're out. So Peter thought he was being extremely generous. Forgiving someone seven times more than doubled the cultural expectations for grace. The grace we offer to others should have no limits.

- ▶ **What can happen when you forgive someone?**
- ▶ **Should we require an apology before we extend forgiveness?**

MATTHEW 18:23-27

To drive home His shocking "seventy times seven" statement to Peter, Jesus told a parable. This was not an actual, true story, but an illustration of the truth Jesus wanted to teach. In Jewish parables, a king symbolized God, and the idea of settling accounts represented judgment. Each of us is like the servant with an incredible debt. Our debt of rebellion against God is so huge that it's even more outrageous than ten thousand talents. But Jesus paid the price, and God has forgiven our debt. We do not deserve forgiveness, but God in His grace and mercy has extended forgiveness to us through Jesus. We are free!

- ▶ **What keeps us from offering forgiveness to someone who has hurt us?**
- ▶ **How are grace and mercy connected to forgiveness?**

MATTHEW 18:28,32-33

Sometimes we make excuses for not extending forgiveness. We worry that forgiveness could encourage someone to keep doing wrong. Practicing tough love is not out of bounds in the Bible. The local church occasionally and collectively will alienate a believer who shames the name of Jesus by hurting others and living a sinful lifestyle (1 Cor. 5:9-13). Church discipline exists to drive a person to the place of sorrow, repentance, and restoration. But that does not mean we don't forgive. As children of a compassionate Father, we must find it in our hearts to forgive. We need to be forgiven, and we are called to forgive. This is more than a one-time transaction. It means forgiving over and over again. It means choosing every day to refuse to hold against our offenders the wrongs they've committed against us. This may seem difficult—impossible, even. And it is! Except that through the power of the Holy Spirit, He will help us to extend grace toward others. Forgiveness is costly. After all, it cost Jesus everything. But even as Christ has forgiven us, He empowers us to extend that same forgiveness to others.

- ▶ **When have you seen forgiveness deepen or restore a relationship? Explain.**
- ▶ **How does forgiving bring glory to God?**