

The Limits of Forgiveness
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Matthew 18:21-35
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Matthew 18:21-35
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. Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt. At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go. But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’ But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the

man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened. Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' 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."

Matthew 6:12,14
"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors…For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Matthew 18:21
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?"

Matthew 18:22
Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

"Forgive everyone for everything they have ever done."

Matthew 18:32-25
"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.
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"The real difficulty is that a wound to the soul works the same as a wound to the body; it strips us of our strength."

- Ronald Rolheiser

“In the person of the king, God did four things—he brought the man before him [truth telling] then took pity on him, forgave the debt, and released him.”

- Tim Keller, *Forgive*

“The purpose of forgiveness is the restoration of communion, the reconciliation of brokenness. Neither should forgiveness be confined to a word to be spoken, a feeling to be felt, or an isolated action to be done; rather, it involves a way of life to be lived in fidelity to God's Kingdom…Forgiveness is at once an expression of a commitment to a way of life, the cruciform life of holiness in which people cast off their ‘old’ selves and learn to live in communion with God and with one another, and a means of seeking reconciliation in the midst of particular sins, specific instances of brokenness. In its broadest context, forgiveness is the way in which God's love moves to reconciliation in the face of sin.”

- L. Gregory Jones, *Embodying Forgiveness*