



Week #5: The Way of Forgiveness

*“And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.”*

Matthew 6:12 (NKJV)

What forgiveness is not:

- Forgiveness is not an excuse.
- Forgiveness is not forgetting.
- Forgiveness is not reconciling.

What forgiveness is:

- Forgiveness is a decision.
- Forgiveness is canceling the debt of what someone owes you.
- Forgiveness will allow you to wish a person well and not harm.

“Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. He couldn’t pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt.

“But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

“But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.

“His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

“When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and

said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt."

Matthew 18:23-34 (NLT)

1. Forgiveness comes _____ and not _____.

"But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt."

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.

Romans 5:8 (NLT)

2. Jesus has removed every obstacle to forgiveness _____.

"But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment."

"If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

John 20:23 (NLT)

3. We are called to forgive _____.

Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?'

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)

Final Thought: _____.

Discussion Questions:

1. How does the parable of the unmerciful servant extend Jesus' teaching on forgiveness (v. 23-34)? In refusing to be merciful to others, what do we deny ourselves (v.31-34)?
2. Do we forgive others so God will forgive us? Or does God forgive us so that we will have a forgiving attitude? Why?
3. What have you found helpful in forgiving those who have wronged you?
4. Who has extended the most forgiveness to you?
5. To whom have you offered much forgiveness?
6. Who do you need to forgive right now?

Recommended Resources:

- *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People*, by Pete Greig
- *Forgive: Why Should I and How Can I?* by Timothy Keller
- *The Commands of Christ: What It Really Means to Follow Jesus*, by Tom Blackaby
- *What Jesus Demands from the World*, by John Piper
- *God, Do You Hear Me?* by Derwin Gray

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Matthew 18:23-34 (NLT)

1. Forgiveness comes “IN SPITE OF” and not “BECAUSE OF”.

“But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.”

But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.
Romans 5:8 (NLT)

2. Jesus has removed every obstacle to forgiveness EXCEPT US.

“But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.”

“If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”
John 20:23 (NLT)

3. We are called to forgive AS CHRIST HAS FORGIVEN US.

Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 4:32 (NIV)

Final Thought: FORGIVEN PEOPLE FORGIVE.

Discussion Questions:

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