

Forgiving Repeat Offenders

²¹Then Peter came to him and asked, “Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?”

²²“No, not seven times,” Jesus replied, “but seventy times seven!

²³“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. ²⁴In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. ²⁵He 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.

²⁶“But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’ ²⁷Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

²⁸“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.

²⁹“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. ³⁰But his creditor wouldn’t wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

³¹“When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. ³²Then 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. ³³Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

³⁵“That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.”

1. FOR CHRISTIANS, FORGIVING ISN'T _____.

“If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.”
Matthew 6:14–15

“Even if that person wrongs you seven times a day and each time turns again and asks forgiveness, you must forgive.”
Luke 17:4 (see also Mark 11:25; Luke 11:4; Col. 3:13; etc.)

2. CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE LIKE JESUS IN _____.

“Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets.”
Matthew 7:12

Do not nurse hatred in your heart for any of your relatives. Confront people directly so you will not be held guilty for their sin. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against a fellow Israelite, but love your neighbor as yourself. Leviticus 19:17–18

If you don't get forgiveness, you don't get forgiveness.

My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. Galatians 2:20

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Romans 12:2

3. A SECOND OFFENDER _____ FORGIVENESS.

There will be no mercy for those who have not shown mercy to others. But if you have been merciful, God will be merciful when he judges you. James 2:13

No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good, and this is what he requires of you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

4. FORGIVE AS MUCH AS YOU WANT TO _____.

When you forgive this man, I forgive him, too. And when I forgive whatever needs to be forgiven, I do so with Christ's authority for your benefit, so that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with his evil schemes. 2 Corinthians 2:10–11

So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image. 2 Corinthians 3:18

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