

The Unforgiving Servant

Matthew 18:21-35

How does it affect you when you know that someone refuses to forgive you, even when you have asked or pleaded with that person?

Genesis 4:23–24

Lamech said to his wives:

**“Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
you wives of Lamech, listen to
what I say:**

**I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for striking me.
If Cain’s revenge is sevenfold,
then Lamech’s is seventy-sevenfold.”**

Luke 6:35–36 ESV

**But love your enemies, and do good,
and lend, expecting nothing in return,
and your reward will be great, and you
will be sons of the Most High, for he is
kind to the ungrateful and the evil.
Be merciful, even as your Father is
merciful.**

Matthew 6:14-15 ESV

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

**How do we miss the
essence of forgiveness?**

Three Things Forgiveness is not:

- 1. Forgiveness is not just a feeling**
- 2. Forgiveness is not forgetting**
- 3. Forgiveness is not excusing**

Matthew 18:26–27 ESV

So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

How do we miss the essence of forgiveness?

Mistake #1: All of us—like the servant—try to bargain with God



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LOOK AT ALL THESE PUPPIES AND KITTENS
THAT I HAVE ... HOW CAN YOU NOT LET
ME IN?

Reality Check-

**Forgiveness is a gift- freely given
by God.**

Matthew 18:28–30 ESV

But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.

How do we miss the essence of forgiveness?

Mistake #2: We think revenge will fix the problem and satisfy us.

Reality Check-

**You and I are just as much in need
of forgiveness as those who
have wronged us greatly.**

Matthew 18:32–33 ESV

Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’

How do we miss the essence of forgiveness?

**Mistake #3: We treat forgiveness
as optional.**

Matthew 6:14-15 ESV

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Reality Check-

“Could those who persist in an unforgiving attitude expect to enjoy the assurance of God’s forgiveness? If Jesus’ teaching means what it says, they could not.”

**Scholar F.F. Bruce on
Matthew 18:35**

James 2:12–13 ESV

So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Matthew 18:21-35

Main Point:

Any limitations we put on personal forgiveness are unthinkable, based on the measure of forgiveness we have received from God.

Psalm 103:12

as far as the east is from the west,
so far does he remove our transgressions
from us.

Jeremiah 31:34 ESV

for they shall all know me, from the least
of them to the greatest, declares the
LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and
I will remember their sin no more.”

Ephesians 4:32

**Be kind to one another, tenderhearted,
forgiving one another, as God in Christ
forgave you.**