

FORGIVENESS IN THE CHURCH
(Matthew 18:21-35)

- I. Recognizing the CONTEXT of Forgiveness (Matt. 18:1-20)
 - A. Believers are described as “LITTLE CHILDREN” (18:3-6)
 - B. Believers are commanded to CONFRONT one who SINS
 - 1. RESTORE the REPENTANT (18:15)
 - 2. EXPEL the UNREPENTANT (18:17)
- II. Establishing the EXTENT of Forgiveness (Matt. 18:21-22)
 - A. Peter asks how OFTEN to forgive the SAME BROTHER
 - 1. Assumes there must be an UPPER LIMIT
 - 2. GENEROUSLY suggests it be SEVEN times
 - B. Jesus says “up to SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN” (cf. Luke 17:3-4)
 - 1. Implies you should not KEEP COUNT
 - 2. Still acknowledges the REALITY of the SIN
- III. Illustrating the SCOPE of Forgiveness (Matt. 18:23-35)
 - A. The setting of the parable is the KINGDOM
 - 1. Not how a person is ADMITTED
 - 2. But how the Kingdom FUNCTIONS

- B. The king holds his subjects ACCOUNTABLE
 - 1. One OWED him a HUGE amount he could NEVER repay
 - a. He, his family and property were to be SOLD
 - b. He begged for MORE TIME
 - 2. In COMPASSION, the king FORGAVE the debt
 - 3. He immediately went to COLLECT a DEBT owed to him
 - a. ABUSED him while DEMANDING payment
 - b. The debtor begged for MORE TIME
 - 4. With INDIFFERENCE, he IMPRISONED the debtor
 - 5. In grief, his fellow subjects REPORTED his actions
 - 6. In ANGER, the king imposed a NEW DEBT for the SIN of being UNFORGIVING

IV. Summarizing the PRINCIPLE of Forgiveness

- A. The SINNER needs to be CONFRONTED (18:15-17)
 - 1. May require escalating DISCIPLINE
 - 2. Some form of RESTITUTION may be appropriate
- B. The sinner must CONFESS and REPENT
- C. The penitent offender MUST be FORGIVEN and RESTORED
- D. God's MERCY toward each of us FAR EXCEEDS any mercy we might show EACH OTHER