

**Read: Matthew 18:21-35**

## Forgive Like God

### **Matthew 18:23-27**

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 talents 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. 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."

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

"This is hard!" Have you ever said that? You might complain how hard an assignment is for class, how hard your chores are at home, or how hard practice was. You might complain how hard it is to clean up your room or do yard work. Even for adults, there are hard jobs, hard assignments, hard conversations, and hard decisions.

Did you know that forgiveness can be hard too? While it is easy to say the words "I forgive you" to someone who wrongs you, it may be hard to actually forgive them. They may have hurt or offended you. They may have been mean or unkind. You remember very easily what they did, said, or failed to do. That memory is crystal clear in your mind, and you may not want to let go of what they have done. Forgiveness can be very hard.

Jesus tells a story of a wealthy king who was settling debts with his servants. Each of them owed a certain amount of money to the king. One servant that came forward owed an impossibly huge amount of money. There was no possible way that he could pay off that debt to the king, but Jesus tells us, "The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go." Why would he do that? The king was merciful. He cared very much for that servant.

Sadly, after being forgiven, that servant forgot about the mercy he received. A fellow servant owed him money. Rather than forgive as he was forgiven, that unmerciful servant had his fellow servant thrown in jail for not paying back the debt. When the king heard about it, he punished the unmerciful servant for being so cruel.

Forgiveness is hard, but God wants me to remember his forgiveness and forgive like him. The fact is, God is all-knowing. He knows everything we think, say, or do. He knows how we disobey him and fail to do what he wants. Yet even then, God still forgives us through Jesus Christ. Through Jesus, God forgives all our sins because Jesus suffered the consequences for all of

them on the cross. Because God forgave me, I can forgive. Forgiven through Christ, I can do more than just say “I forgive you.” I can actually *forgive* the person who wrongs me!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for Younger Children**

- What does it mean to forgive someone?
- How does Jesus make it easier for us to forgive?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Why is it easier to say “I forgive you” than to actually forgive someone?
- How can Christ’s love help me to forgive someone who has wronged me?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Agree or Disagree: God wants me to forgive and forget the sin someone commits against me.
- How do you respond to a Christian friend who tells you, “What he did was so wrong! There is no way I can possibly forgive him for what he did”?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Lord, you are a God who forgives, even though I do not deserve it. Be merciful to me. Help me to forgive the person who has wronged me as you graciously forgive me. Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 384:1,2 – By Grace I’m Saved**

By grace I’m saved, grace free and boundless; my soul, believe and doubt it not.  
Why waver at this word of promise? Has Scripture ever falsehood taught?  
So then this word must true remain: by grace you, too, shall heav’n obtain.

By grace God’s Son, our only Savior, came down to earth to bear our sin.  
Was it because of your own merit that Jesus died your soul to win?  
No, it was grace, and grace alone, that brought him from his heav’nly throne.