

Forgive as you have been forgiven.

Has someone ever done something mean to you, hurt your feelings, or damaged something you find special? How did it make you feel? Probably pretty sad and maybe even a little bit angry. These feelings are normal and behaving in a way that hurts another person is not how God wants us to live. Did you know God doesn't want us to live in anger either?

Think about it this way- every day we do things that hurt God's feelings- we sin. Sin is a fancy word for the bad things we do- when we say unkind words, when we don't obey our parents, when we lie instead of telling the truth, etc. How do you think God responds to our sin? He forgives it! The Bible tells us that God has cast our wrongdoing (sin) as far as the east is from the west (Psalm 103:12)- that's the furthest anything could ever be.

Since we are God's children, He wants us to follow his example and forgive those who sin against us. Jesus told a story to his disciples about forgiveness. **Read it in Matthew 18:21-35.** The point Jesus wanted his followers to remember is that we should forgive others any wrongdoing against us because God forgives ALL the wrong we do against him.

The story, one of Jesus' parables, was really an answer to a question Peter, one of Jesus' disciples asked. Peter wanted to know how many times he should forgive someone. Surely, there is a limit to forgiveness (Peter's guess was 7); if the mean kid at school calls you a not-nice name over and over do you really have to keep forgiving him?

In the parable, a servant owes a king lots of money- it would cost his family everything to repay the debt- even their freedom. The servant pleads for forgiveness and the king takes pity on him and forgives the debt. A short time later the forgiven servant found another man who owed him thousands of dollars and demanded repayment. When the man couldn't pay what he owed the forgiven servant threw him in jail. The king heard about this and condemned the wicked and unforgiving servant. Even after being forgiven a great debt, the servant would not practice forgiveness and forgive a much smaller debt against him. The king had him thrown in jail until the huge debt was repaid.

Jesus explained that God has forgiven each of us more debt (sin against him) than we could imagine and because of this, we should forgive others when they sin against us. Jesus told Peter he should forgive 7x70 times... that's 490 times! Really though, Jesus just meant we should forgive each other always- because God forgives us always and forgiveness is an act of love.

Family Discussion Questions:

Does forgiving someone mean we have to forget what they did?

What should you do if someone has wronged you in a way that is unsafe? Who can you talk to about it?

How can you pray for each other this week? Who do you need to forgive?



Matthew 18:21-35

Family Challenge:

490 times is a lot! See if you can do any of these activities 490 times without stopping. Remember Jesus wants us to forgive so many times we won't even bother counting anymore.

BOUNCE A BALL

It can be a basketball on the ground or a ping pong ball on a paddle or any type of ball. You choose!

YOUR FAVORITE WORKOUT MOVE

Jumping jacks, pushups, squats...

WRITE YOUR NAME

Bonus points if you use different colors!

SHOOT SOME BASKETS

Crumple up some paper and see if you can make it land in the trashcan 490 times in a row.

JUMP ROPE

Can you hop 490 times without stopping...or tripping?

COUNT

Drink some water and see if you can make it to 490.

Memory Verse:

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. --- Ephesians 4:32

