

## “Releasing God’s Forgiveness”

*Matthew 18:21-35*

### Introduction

In Matthew 18:21-35, Jesus tells the parable of the unforgiving debtor. A king forgave a slave of all his debt. However, when placed in a similar situation, that same slave refused to forgive a fellow slave of his debt. Forgiveness is the decision to cancel a debt when there’s been an infraction against you. To forgive someone does not excuse or justify sin. To forgive means to relinquish any pursuit of personal judgment based on the sin that took place. Forgiveness is a reflection of God’s mercy. It is also an opportunity to extend to others what we experienced from God when we accepted Jesus Christ.

Forgiveness can be unilateral when we choose to forgive someone, and they have not repented. This kind of forgiveness benefits us because it keeps us from becoming bitter and self-absorbed by the infraction against us. Forgiveness can be transactional, in which the person who sinned against us repents, which opens the door for reconciliation and relationship. Their repentance demonstrates their confession and turning from sin. Since God accepts our forgiveness and repentance, it shows our gratitude for salvation when we choose to do the same for others.

Through Jesus Christ’s sacrifice on the cross, we are forgiven our sins and reconciled to the Father. Because of this reconciliation through Jesus Christ, we can now have a relationship with the Father. The forgiveness of our sins and our newly formed relationship with the Father leads to our spiritual restoration, allowing us to fellowship and intimately connect with Him. Similarly, when the Father sees we are forgiving others how He has forgiven us, He is more active in bringing deliverance to our lives for our need of Him. It becomes a boomerang effect in the lives of others because we are showing them mercy just as the Father has shown us mercy.

### Getting Started

1. How do you define forgiveness? Does it align with God’s definition?
2. Have you ever struggled to forgive someone?

### Let’s Get Personal

1. Has anyone sinned against you? If so, how did you address it?
2. Have you sinned against someone? If so, how did they address it?
3. Do you need mercy? How do you feel about giving to others what you need yourself?

### Take the Next Step

1. Have you observed unforgiveness in the heart of someone else? What has that done to their relationship with you and others?
2. In obedience, are you willing to cancel any debt of people who have sinned against you? If so, how can you put action to your words this week?
3. Want to go deeper? Take time to look at the following passages: Ephesians 4:30-32; Psalm 66:18; Matthew 6:14-15; Mark 11:20-26; 1 John 1:9; Psalm 51:1-19; I Corinthians 13:5; Ezekiel 18:24, Ezekiel 18:32; James 5:19-20; Matthew 5:44; Colossians 3:12-14; Genesis 40:1-9; Genesis 50:15-20; Psalm 32:1-11.

### **Renew Your Mind**

*“My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”*

*Matthew 18:35*

---