



Forgiveness

Adapted from "Demands of Discipleship" series by Dennis Marquardt.

One of the greatest joys of Christianity is the forgiveness of all our sins. One of the greatest challenges is to forgive others all their sins. The Scriptures teach us that both being forgiven and being a forgiver is required as a disciple of Jesus Christ. As men, we cannot find forgiveness if we do not also give forgiveness.

Reflect on the following historical example of Jesus giving strength to forgive:

On February 9, 1960, Adolph Coors III was kidnapped and held for ransom. Seven months later, his body was found on a remote hillside. He had been shot to death. Adolph Coors IV, then fifteen years old, lost not only his father but his best friend. For years, young Coors hated Joseph Corbett, the man who was sentenced to life for the slaying.

Then in 1975, Adolph Coors became a Christian. While he divested himself of his interest in the family beer business, he could not divest himself of the hatred that consumed him. Resentment seethed within him and blighted his growth in faith. He prayed to God for help because he realized how his hatred for Corbett was alienating him from God and others. The day came, when claiming the Spirit's presence, Adolph Coors visited the maximum-security unit of Colorado's Canon City penitentiary and tried to talk with Corbett. Corbett refused to see him. Coors left a bible inscribed with this message: I'm here to see you today and I'm sorry that we could not meet. As a Christian, I am summoned by our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, to forgive. I do forgive you, and I ask you to forgive me for the hatred I've held in my heart for you." Later Coors confessed, "I have a love for that man that only Jesus Christ could have put in my heart."¹

¹ James S. Hewett, *Illustrations Unlimited*, (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc, 1988), 215.

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COURAGE

C1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Matthew 18:21–35 (ESV) Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times. “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. 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. 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. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. 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?’ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

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.

- When you think of the word forgiveness, what comes to mind?
- When was the last time you forgave someone and why?
- When was the last time you were forgiven and why?

- Was it easier to forgive someone else or want to be forgiven?
- Why do you feel it is easier to be forgiven than forgiving someone else?
- Understanding that the Cross was all about the forgiveness of our sin, how does that change your view of forgiving others?

C2: Make a list of those you need to forgive and make an opportunity to offer forgiveness to them. Are there things in our past that you are still holding on to that needs to be forgiven? Spend time in prayer, asking God to help you to forgive. What is God revealing to you in the area of forgiveness?

STRENGTH

S1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Matthew 18:21–35 (ESV)

- What were some of your thoughts as you read the parable in Matthew 18?
- Have you ever treated someone the same way as the man in the parable? You have been forgiven and yet you have not forgiven? Describe your scenario

S2: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Matthew 6:14–15 (ESV)

- Jesus says that the nature in how you forgive is how you are to be forgiven. Based upon this, how do you feel you are forgiven by God?
- Is it hard to imagine being forgiven the same way we forgive, why? What keeps us from forgiving?
- How do we find the strength in Christ to forgive others?

S3: In forgiving others, you no longer hold grudges, are free from anger, revenge, and move forward without being stuck in the past. What are some things that you are still holding onto from your past that you need to forgive? Give some practical ways of forgiving those you have not forgiven.

ENDURANCE

E1: Read and answer or discuss the following.

Matthew 18:21–35 (ESV)

- Have you ever been a situation like the man from Matthew 18, where you were forgiven but did not forgive another? Describe the situation.
- How would you teach others to forgive as Christ taught us in Matthew 18?
- For many men, it is difficult to forget, let alone forgive. Why do you think that is?

E2: Read and answer the following

Matthew 6:14–15 (ESV)

- In forgiving, you are set free to be used by God. What is holding you back that you need to forgive?
- It is easier to ask for forgiveness than to forgive, how can you become more Christ like in your forgiving of others?
- Realizing that God forgives us in the manner you forgive others, on a scale of 1-4 with 1 being very well and 4 being not very well, how would you rate your forgiveness of others? Write out a plan to improve.

- As men, you can see the heart of God by the forgiveness of our sin as Jesus hung on the Cross, how do you forgive as He did amidst the pain and suffering?

E3: Over the course of the next month, find specific examples in your life of where you need to forgive as you want to be forgiven. Journal them and at the end of the month, go over the list and see how well you did in forgiving them as God has forgiven you. If you find areas that you need to readjust your forgiving, search the Scriptures, seek the Holy Spirit's power and make the necessary changes in how you forgive.