

# Practice Forgiveness

*“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother if he sins against me? Up to seven times? Jesus answered, I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”  
(Matthew 18:21-22)*

*“Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.” (1 Peter 4:8)*

Today we will be looking for a special group of people whom we are putting at our back. A people whom we know very well, we lived with, we share one roof, one bed, one plate of food, and we may even have with them one fate of faith! Today the light will be directed on people whom we walk before, and with whom beautiful time we spent, but now we dispose them at our back! Among them if we search we may find the old husband or the divorced wife! We may find the beloved daughter or the deserted son! Or even we may discover in the middle of them the dear brother or the keen sister. This group can cover as well a broad spectrum of relations: master-servants, children-parents, teacher-students,...

What cause us to separate from them? They might sin against us, or we could be the one who sin against them! They might be unfaithful, and they defiled the marital bed. They may have given us promise and broke it. They might slandered us, intrigued us, grumbled against us. They might have deceived us, were envious to us, beaten us and rejected us. They might have taken our position, pulled our legs, shaken our prestige, spoiled our reputation and put us down. They might have wronged us, persecuted us, mocked us, belittled us, sneered at us, teased us, or stolen something from us. Thistles, briars and bush thorns, a multitude of sin and a heap of rubble. And the more you dig the more you go down. The more you search the more you find, and the list will grow and may extend and reach up to the number of seventy seven!

We will use Simon Peter as a pivot to explain the subject of this week. In Matthew Chapter 18, Jesus started the theme of forgiveness by expressing the unconditional love of God in the parable of the lost son. Then he continued to recommend the protocol that we should follow when a brother sins against us. First, we should start with a private advice. If no response go and try with one or two witnesses. And if he will not respond refer the case to the church. And if he is irresponsible at all treat him as a pagan or tax collector (which means to try with him again in another suitable time). In this theme of forgiveness that Jesus discloses, there is one proposal He put and that is to offer forgiveness when you are in the position that enables you to forgive *“the upper hand enabled position.”*

Peter’s question was ‘what if he responds and repents from his ways but then sins again, how many times should I forgive him? According to commentaries, the teachers of the law allow offenders to request for a special offer of forgiveness for three times from the assaulted one. But Peter went beyond that and said seven times remembering God’s perfect number. Peter had mercy in his heart and that is fine, but Jesus finished to him the picture of forgiveness by using another parable of the unmerciful servant. **(Read in your Bible Matthew 18:23-35)**

Jesus in this parable spoke about the kingdom of God in a view we want to share with you. God established His kingdom starting by the ‘rod of forgiveness’. He settled the matter with His children

by the policy of forgiveness. In this parable the master forgave in total all the debts of his servant. But the servant failed to pass forgiveness to his fellow servant when the last asked him for mercy. And when the master came to know that the servant whom he forgave refused to cancel the debts of his fellow, his anger stirred against that wicked and ordered the jailors to torture him. And Jesus closed the parable by this statement, **“This is how My heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your hearts.” (Matthew 18:35)**

Why does God use such a firm stern language? What does He want to impress in our hearts?

Forgiveness is one of the crucial things that belong to God’s authority. The teacher of the law accused Jesus with blasphemy because He said to the paralytic man *‘your sins are forgiven.’* For they are questioning how this man has the power to forgive the sins, for this power belongs only to God! Jesus used a firm language in this parable because God wants us to practice forgiveness as a grace that comes from Him and that we ought to pass it to others. This is an authority and honour given to us to share it with the people around us. Forgiveness spirit is a reconciliation force to settle all the accounts. We need this reconciliation to settle all the accounts in our jobs, families, relations, ministries and even in our church. God’s aim from this hard parable of the unmerciful servant is to force us to get use of the new authority that He gave to us. *For forgiveness is power and not a burden! Please take the lead and use it.*

Jesus compared the offer of Peter’s forgiveness with that of God’s forgiveness. Out of courtesy and mercy Peter spoke, but God’s forgiveness goes beyond that to reveal His unconditional love. If Peter’s or man’s forgiveness emerged from the spirit of generosity, God’s forgiveness goes on and on without limit-**(Seventy-seven)**. To develop such a picture of forgiveness it needs wisdom before all. Peter after many years of his discussion with Jesus about forgiveness, wrote a letter around 62-64 AD, which clearly showed that he came to know the need of deep love between the humankind to cover the heap of sins that we mentioned before. And he described in this verse **“because love covers over a multitude of sins.”**

Brethren do not be deceived by Satan which tries to pull you away from the position that enable you to practice forgiveness. Resist the devil and reduce the gap. If you are in the position to forgive do it, and do not add salt to the sores. Do not hold back the balm of forgiveness from the broken relations, the exposed wounds and the injured hearts. **“Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbour, ‘Come back later; I’ll give it tomorrow-when you now have it with you.” (Proverbs 3:27-28)**

**My Dear and Beloved:** No time left to be wasted, let us go back to the cross of Calvary and with His love let us be filled. Let us waste no time to turn to that old partner, colleague, children and friend. Let us go back to old wounds and with cream of forgiveness let it be sooth. Forgive and let the paralytic walk. Forgive and let the ministries move. Forgive and let the church bloom. May God bless you and His full measure of grace is upon you.

**My Prayer:** Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for my sins to give me eternal life. Lord Jesus forgives me all my sins \_\_\_\_\_ . Lord touches my heart and helps me to forgive and to accept those who hurt me. Lord helps me to overcome all my hurts and my discouragement. Lord I trust you that you will be the one to heal all my wounds, this all I ask and pray in Jesus name, Amen.