

Seventy Times Seven

Matthew 18:21-35; *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 243-251

Have you ever been so angry at someone that it was hard to forgive them? How many times should you forgive someone who does the same thing over and over? Think about it as you read this Bible story.

One day, Peter asked Jesus, "How many times shall I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" In Jesus' time the priests and rabbis taught that people only had to forgive a person three times. So Peter thought he was being generous by suggesting the number seven.

Not seven times, Jesus said, but seventy times seven. That's 490 times. More times than you can keep track of. More times than you should *try* to keep track of. Jesus meant that we should not count the

times we forgive someone. Then Jesus told a story to make His point.

A certain man worked for a king, managing the king's money. One day the king sat down to look at his accounts. He discovered this man's account was millions in debt, far more



than the man could ever repay. The king ordered the man, his wife, and his children to be sold. And everything he owned was to be sold. All the money would help repay the debt.

The Message

God wants me to forgive others from my heart.

Memory Verse

“ ‘Forgive your brother from your heart’ ”

(Matthew 18:35, NIV).

The man fell on his knees and begged for mercy. “Give me time,” he said, “and I will repay everything I owe.” The king knew the man could never repay so much money. But the king felt sorry for the man. So he canceled the debt and let his servant go.

The king’s servant was so relieved he rushed away. On his way out, he met another servant—one who owed him some money. It was just a little bit, about a day’s wages. The king’s servant grabbed the second man by the neck. He began choking him. “Pay back the money you owe me,” he demanded.

“Please be patient with me,” begged the second man. “Give me time and I will pay back everything I owe you.” But the king’s servant refused. He had the second man thrown in prison until he could pay the debt.

Other servants of the king saw the whole thing. They immediately reported it to the king. The king called the first servant back. “You wicked servant,” he stormed. “I canceled millions you owed me. Shouldn’t you have had the same mercy on someone else? Someone who owed you so little?” And the king had his servant taken away to prison.

We are like the king’s

servant. He owed more money than he could ever repay. We can never be good enough. But just as the king forgave his servant, God has forgiven our sins. And since God has forgiven us, He asks us to treat others with mercy. With kindness and forgiveness. Seventy times seven. Four hundred and ninety. More times than we can keep track of.





S A B B A T H

- DO** Play quiet music as you and your family read the lesson story together. How much is seventy times seven?
- DO** Think of something for which you need forgiveness. Then think of someone you need to forgive. Talk about it together and decide what to do.
- READ** Read the memory verse together.
- PRAY** Pray for someone who has been unkind to you.

The servant owed the king more than six million dollars in American money. The other man owed the servant less than twelve dollars!



S U N D A Y

- READ** During worship today, read Matthew 18:21-35. Act out the story.
- DO** Ask your parents to show you the bills they get each month. Think about the money the king's servant owed. Hold up your parents' smallest bill. Think about the amount the second man owed the king's servant. Who owed more?
- PRAY** Ask God to help your family use money wisely.

M O N D A Y

- DRAW** Before worship time, draw pictures about the lesson story. Then use the pictures to tell the story to your family during worship.
- DO** Discuss together: When someone asks you for forgiveness, is it easy to forgive? What if you have to keep forgiving for the same thing? Read and discuss Matthew 18:21, 22 together. Say the memory verse to three different people.
- PRAY** Pray that God will help you to forgive others.

T U E S D A Y

- DO** Before worship cut out a small heart from an empty plastic bottle. Punch a hole in the heart and thread a 6-inch (15 cm) length of yarn through it. Put the heart in an ice cube tray with the loose end of the yarn staying out of the tray. Add water. Put the tray in the freezer. Save this for worship tomorrow.
- READ** During worship read Matthew 18:23-27 together. Draw a face that shows how you feel when you forgive someone. Draw a face that shows how you feel when you ask for forgiveness.
- DO** Say the memory verse together. What word could be used instead of "heart"?

W E D N E S D A Y

- READ** During family worship, discuss: Why is it often hard to forgive someone? Read Matthew 24:12 together.
- DO** Take the ice cube tray with the frozen heart out of the freezer. Sin makes our hearts (our attitudes, our lives) cold. People with cold hearts don't want to forgive or treat others well. What could melt this cold heart? (Use a paper or cloth towel. Try to melt the ice and free the heart.) Only Jesus can thaw our cold hearts. As we let Him live in our hearts, we will be forgiving and caring.
- DRAW** Draw the memory verse with pictures instead of words.
- PRAY** Pray for a kind, forgiving heart.



T H U R S D A Y

READ

Read Matthew 6:12, 14 for family worship. What was Jesus doing when He said these words? Pray for people who have wronged you. Pray that you will forgive from your heart.

DO

Imagine that you are the king in your lesson. What would you say to the servant who couldn't pay? Compare your answer to Matthew 18:27.

DO

Play, sing, hum, or listen to "He Has Shown Thee (Micah 6:8)" (He Is Our Song, No. 125).

F R I D A Y

DO

For worship do a charade of the lesson story.

DRAW

Write or draw about something wrong you have done. Pray now and ask Jesus to forgive you. Jesus forgives you and gives you a new heart (a new attitude).

DRAW

Make a small red paper heart. Add or draw a picture of Jesus as a symbol of the new heart He gives you. Read Ezekiel 11:19 and Ephesians 4:32 together.

PRAY

Pray for kind hearts that will always be ready to forgive others.

PUZZLE

Directions: Answer the following questions to discover the point of this lesson.

1. A man worked _____ a king.

2. Do not _____ the times you forgive.

3. Priests and rabbis said to forgive _____ times.

4. The _____ discovered a giant debt.

5. The servant owed _____ in debt.

6. " _____ me time," he said, "and I will repay everything I owe."

7. The king _____ the debt.