

## **The Solution to Practically Everything | Part 3**

### Lesson 7

Matthew 7:1-5, 18:21-35; Acts 7:57-60; Ephesians 4:31-32

November 19, 2023

### **Grace to Forgive**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Early this year “The First International Conference on Forgiving and Being Forgiven” was held at an Israeli University. One of the speakers, Darryl Green of Baltimore, spoke of his journey to forgive *and* befriend the murderer of his little brother, Ruben. Kimyon Marshall had stabbed his high school classmate while arguing over...sneakers. Today Darryl and Kimyon jointly run workshops for an organization they launched, “Deep Forgiveness,” which works to stop violence. It took 17 years for Darryl to reach that point of forgiveness. He then successfully worked for Kimyon’s release from a life sentence without parole.

Such stories of forgiving a horrible crime are amazing. Yet we all know friends or family members who over some real or imagined slight will not speak to, or forgive, a sister or former best friend. Sadly, this occurs among Christian families and friends. Let’s see what the Bible tells us about one of its major themes—forgiving.

***Memory verse: “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”  
—Ephesians 4:32***

Pray, and read the passages listed above. What questions or observations do you have about them?

**OBSERVATION: What do the passages say?**

1. How many times does Jesus tell Peter to forgive?  
(Matthew 18:22)
  
2. How did the king treat the servant who owed him ten-thousand bags of gold? (Matthew 18:23-28, 32-34)
  
3. What is Stephen asking the Lord to forgive?  
(Acts 7:57-60)
  
4. What actions or emotions are in opposition to forgiveness? What should one do instead?  
(Ephesians 4:31-32)
  
5. Contrary to common usage of Matthew 7:1, we do need to evaluate/judge others within the church at times (see 1 Timothy 5:19-20). Jesus warns against a certain way of judging in Matthew 7:2. What is it?

**INTERPRETATION: What do the passages mean?**

1. Should forgiveness just be toward those who are otherwise good people or at least those that have apologized? (Genesis 50:15-21; Mark 11:25; Luke 23:34; Acts 7:57-60; Romans 5:6-8)
  
2. Saul began a “great persecution” against the church (Acts 8:1-2). Yet, Saul was chosen by Jesus to be His “instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.” (Acts 9:15) Why did Jesus forgive Saul and choose him to become the Apostle Paul, one of His most faithful servants? (Psalm 103:10-14; Isaiah 55:7; Acts 22:3, 12-15; 1 Corinthians 15:9-10; Philippians 3:4b-6, 12-14)

3. How does God view forgiveness, including within the church? (Matthew 7:2; 2 Corinthians 2:10-11; Colossians 3:12-14)

4. What are some barriers to forgiveness?  
(Leviticus 19:18; John 14:24; Romans 12:19; Ephesians 4:26-27; Hebrews 12:15)

**APPLICATION: How do the passages apply to your life?**

1. C.S. Lewis stated, "To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you." Is this accurate? Why/why not?
  
2. Jesus said "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."  
(Mark 11:25) Has this happened to you? What did you do, and what was result?
  
3. Is there someone you need to forgive, or do you know someone who won't forgive another? Write a prayer asking what you should do, for help to forgive, and for others to forgive.