

Family Lesson 63

Principle: We are to forgive as we have been forgiven.

Bible Character(s): Jesus and Peter

Scripture Reference: Matthew 18:21-35

1. Worship - Choose your favorite songs from the [Spotify playlist](#) found on the curriculum resource page. Have fun, sing loudly, and follow along with the motions!

2. Bible Lesson - Read through the lesson with your family. The bold font is meant to be read aloud along with the Scripture references.

Bible Lesson

Can anyone remember what we talked about last week? Does God care more about the condition of our heart or our outward appearance? (God cares more about the condition of our heart.) We discussed how following the rules and doing what others expect us to do is not a bad thing, but this does not change the sin in our hearts. Who can change our hearts? (Only Jesus can change our hearts.) God wants us to live in a way that brings glory to him by obeying his commandments. He wants us to worship him with all of our heart so that everything we do is for him, not just because it is what we are expected to do.

Today, we will read what Jesus says about forgiveness. Forgiveness is choosing not to be mad at someone for something they did that hurt you. Let's begin by reading the Bible in Matthew 18 [NLT].

Matthew 18:21-22

²¹ Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?"

²² "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!"

We do not know if Peter is referring to a specific situation when he asks Jesus this question. We do know that in the Old Testament, Amos 1:3 says, "For three sins of Damascus, even for four, I will not turn back my wrath." It is thought that the Israelites may have taken this to mean they only needed to forgive someone three times, that for three sins God shows favor, but for four he does not. If Peter believed this, then he would have thought he was doing really well to forgive someone seven times. Do you think Peter was surprised to hear Jesus say, "No . . . seventy times seven"? (Allow responses.)

Parents, ask your child to write the equation $70 \times 7 = \underline{\quad}$ on a piece of paper or dry erase board. Work together to do the math equation and fill in the blank. **490 is a large number. Do you think Jesus meant that you need to count how many times you forgive someone?** (Allow responses.) **No, he meant that we are to always forgive others. If someone hurts you by saying something mean and they continue to hurt you in this way, you are to continue to forgive them. Let's continue reading to see why we should always forgive, even when someone continues to hurt us.**

Optional: Gather an item that can be used as a crown. While reading through verses 23-35, illustrate each character in the story (the king, the servant who owed the king a debt, the other servant who owed the first servant a debt).

Matthew 18:23-35

²³ "Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. ²⁴ In the process,

one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. ²⁵ He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. ²⁶ “But the man fell down before his master and begged him, ‘Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.’” ²⁷ Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt.

²⁸ “But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment.

²⁹ “His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it,’ he pleaded. ³⁰ But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

³¹ “When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. ³² Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt.

³⁵ “That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.”

Why is the king mad at the servant? (The king forgave the servant and did not make him pay a lot of money; the servant did not do the same for someone who owed him money. He accepted forgiveness but did not offer forgiveness.) **In these verses, the king is like God. God forgives all of our sins when we believe and trust in him. We should forgive others because we have been and continue to be forgiven. Our sins against God are much greater than another's sins against us. If God can forgive us for our sins, shouldn't we forgive others when they hurt us?**

As a family, gather a bag of pebbles or small stones. In this illustration, a pebble represents a wrong done to you and the cup is your heart. Ask your child to give you an example of a time that someone hurt them. Tell them this is represented by the pebble. Drop the pebble into the cup. Add pebbles to the cup for each example you think of as a family.

When we choose not to forgive others, the pebbles pile up in the cups, just as resentment piles up in our hearts. This unforgiveness is sin. How does it make you feel when you choose not to forgive someone? Do you feel like you are carrying around a weight in your heart? (Allow responses.) **That is what sin does to us, and especially the sin of choosing not to forgive. It holds us back from loving others in the way God wants us to love. We do not experience true joy that God offers us when we obey his commandments. God commands us to forgive others. Forgiving others takes a huge weight off of our heart and makes us free.** (Pour out the pebbles to emphasize the point.) **We are also free to love and experience joy when we live to worship and bring glory to God. But if you choose to not forgive, you choose resentment. This is sin. We must forgive others, because God forgave us!**

Prayer

Spend a few minutes in prayer to close your family time. Thank God for forgiving us of our sin through Jesus. Ask him to help us have a heart that forgives others, because we have already been forgiven.

Activity

Forgiveness

The purpose is to have children examine their heart to see if they have a forgiving heart.

Supplies:

[Worksheet – “Heart of Forgiveness”](#)

Have your child think about times that they have forgiven others for something that has been done against them. Tell them to write these examples down (or draw a picture of them) in the “Heart of Forgiveness” section of the worksheet. Next, ask them if there is anyone in their life right now that they are holding a grudge against and have not forgiven. Lead them in a prayer, asking God to help them have a heart of forgiveness. **Is it easy to forgive? What makes it difficult?** (Allow responses.) **It can be hard to forgive someone if they hurt us badly. We are angry, and we think the other person deserves to be punished. Often, we hold onto the sin they committed against us until we experience justice. Have you**

ever hurt someone else and they forgave you? (Allow responses.) **How do you think it made that person feel when you hurt them? Do you think you deserved forgiveness?** (Allow responses.) **All of us have been hurt by others, and we all hurt other people. This is our sin. Every time we sin, we hurt God. But Jesus took the punishment for our sin when he died on the cross. He continues to show us forgiveness if we ask him. We do not deserve his great love, but God gives it anyway. Because God forgives us, we can forgive others. If we do not forgive, then we sin not only against the person who hurt us, but also against God.**

On the worksheet – have them color the “4 givenness, me, others” at the bottom of the worksheet as a reminder that forgiveness is for all of us. **For those of us who believe and trust that Jesus died for our sins, God has granted forgiveness if we ask him. We can forgive because God has forgiven us, and he continues to forgive us. Place this worksheet somewhere in your home or room to remind you that God has forgiven you, so you are to forgive others.**

