# A GODLY LIFE

# 3. <u>A Forgiving Life</u>



#### **Introduction**

Many people find it hard to forgive others. Often there are resentments and hurts in our families and in the places where we study or work. What is your family like? Is it possible to live together in love? It is!

God's love is a forgiving love, a love that wipes away guilt and hurt. We can experience that love and forgiveness personally, and when we do he can help us love and forgive others. A Godly life is one governed by love, and the only way to walk in love is to have a forgiving heart. In this study we will learn what God's Word says about forgiveness.

#### **1. Parable on Forgiveness**

Read the story or parable that Jesus told in Matthew 18:21-35.

What question did Peter ask?

Matthew 18:21 \_\_\_\_\_

• Why did the King call his servant?

Matthew 18:23-24 \_\_\_\_\_

Why did the King forgive the servant even though he owed so much?

When the servant left the palace he met another servant. What did he demand from this servant?

Matthew 18:28-30 \_\_\_\_\_

Why should the servant have forgiven his fellow servant?

Matthew 18:32-33

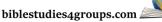
Discuss

What can you learn from this parable about God's forgiveness and the importance of forgiving others?

Peter asked Jesus how often he should forgive others. What answer does Jesus imply in this parable?

## 2. Result of Unforgiveness

'I can't forgive him!' Many people say that without realising the consequences their unwillingness to forgive will cause. The selfish servant in the parable refused to forgive his fellow servant and was cast into prison. If we refuse to forgive it will affect our relationship with God and others, and it may affect our health too.



A. Our Relationship with God
What effect will unforgiveness have on our relationship with God?
Matthew 6:12, 14-15
Ephesians 4:26-27
1 John 3:10
B. Our Relationship with One Another
What happens if bitterness stays in our hearts?
Hebrews 12:14-15
Discuss have seen this happen?
<u>C. Our Own Lives</u>
Bitterness is likened to a root that will bring trouble. A root is something that grows and spreads under the ground, and in the same way bitterness can grow and spread in our lives. Initially it may be hidden, but as time goes on the effect of bitterness can be seen.
How are sin and sickness often linked?
Hebrews 12:13, 15
Psalm 32:3-5
What is the result in our lives if we turn from evil?
Proverbs 3:7, 8
If you have resentment or bitterness towards someone else, even from something that happened years ago, it will affect your life. We can forgive. It is a choice, and we have the Holy Spirit to help us. What will forgiveness mean?

#### **3. Meaning of Forgiveness**

In the parable the King had pity on the servant and let him off from paying the debt. That is what forgiveness really means – we excuse the one who has hurt us, we let him off. We will look further at the meaning of forgiveness.



What is God's forgiveness like? Jeremiah 31:34

In 1 Corinthians 13:5 it says that love is not resentful. This means that we don't store in our memory the things others have done to us. How can we learn to forget these things?

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If we are resentful towards another person we will 'try to get back at them', by speaking against them, criticising them, not speaking to them, or deliberately trying to hurt them. In what practical ways can we repay evil with good?

What can you learn about forgiveness from these verses?

Colossians 3:12-14 \_\_\_\_\_

The word 'forbearing' or 'bear' means 'to hold back self'. As God's children we are to hold back our selfishness and pride and forgive others.

### 4. Example of Forgiveness

The King in the parable is God the Father. This story demonstrates that God sets an example of forgiveness for us to follow. This was also seen in the life of Jesus.

What was Jesus' attitude to those who hurt him?

Luke 22:33-34, John 21:15 \_\_\_\_\_\_

What difference should this example make to us?

1 Peter 2:21-23

What reason is given that we should forgive one another in these verses?

Ephesians 4:32			
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Colossians 3:13

It is hard to forgive isn't it? However, unless you do, you will be hurting yourself. If God has been speaking to you, bring to him the name of the one you have resentment towards, and ask him to help you forgive that person. You also need to ask him to forgive you for holding that sin in your heart, and you may need to speak to the person concerned. God's grace is there to help you. Make the right choice!

