

**Spiritual How-to's -
How you can please the Lord
The Power of Forgiveness
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Intro. Can you imagine owing a debt of 1 billion dollars? I can't. And yet, that's the balance of debt owed in our opening story. How could an individual even rack up so high a debt? It is an unbelievable amount of \$\$, yet we are told there was a king who had a servant that owed him "ten thousand talents" – which is equal to 1 billion dollars.

I. Matthew 18:21-35 gives us the account, it is the story of the power of forgiveness.

- A. It begins with Peter asking Jesus a question that most of us would have asked –
"How many times do I have to forgive my brother who keeps offending me?
7 times?"
 - 1. Peter was saying, 7 times in a day seems like a gracious attempt at forgiveness
 - 2. What do you say, Jesus?
 - 3. Jesus response was, v. 22-23. Not 7 but 77 times – this is the lesson of forgiveness in heaven's kingdom TPT
- B. Jesus said, Let me illustrate it this way, this is how kingdom forgiveness works
v. 23-35
- C. There is a king who will settle accounts
- D. Debtor owing 1 billion \$\$ called to pay
 - a. Couldn't pay, family threatened
 - b. He begged patience in repayment
 - c. King was merciful & showed compassion
 - d. Released him & forgave him of his debt
- E. That forgiven debtor demanded payment from one who owed him
 - a. that servant begged patience & was denied it
 - b. The king was told
 - c. The king told the forgiven debtor he should have forgiven just as he had been forgiven
 - d. He was then delivered to the jailers
 - e. Moral – if we don't release forgiveness to others as was released to us, we will be held accountable by God

II. Let's look at the truths about forgiveness in this text

- A. The attitude of forgiveness is limitless. Not 7 times, or 77 times – but as many times as necessary
 - 1. When we are offended and someone has erred against us, to forgive them is expected

2. Releasing them from that debt is our job
 3. They cannot ever repay it. We must cancel it, let it go, let it die, releasing it & them
- B. We owe an unrepayable debt to God for our forgiveness from missing the mark & racking up our sin against Him. It's affected our family for generations.
1. Yet, our King has wiped that debt clean. Released us completely & set us free.
 2. When we don't forgive ourselves, or release ourselves, we turn & demand restitution from others. Finding it hard to accept mercy we show no mercy.
- C. In angry judgment, God will punish those who do not release forgiveness from their heart
- D. Even the worst offense done to us can & should be released from our heart through forgiveness
1. Their debt is 1 billion \$\$ and unpayable
 2. But forgiveness released by you frees you in heaven and earth
 3. Their state now, is no longer your concern
 4. The King will settle all accounts

III. The power of forgiveness is undeniable and well documented in medicine & psychology

- A. Forgiveness is a decision to let go of resentment
1. Forgiveness lessens the grip of the offending act
 2. It doesn't mean forgetting or excusing
 3. It bring peace to you to go on with your life
- B. Forgiveness is letting go of grudges & bitterness
1. Wounds leave bitterness & anger
 2. Without practicing forgiveness, you may be the one who suffers the most
- C. Forgiveness doesn't guarantee reconciliation
- D. Forgiving yourself is vital
1. If God has forgiven you (which He has, if you have asked Him to), then who are you to hold yourself to a higher standard than he has?
 2. It is actually your shame & pride that you need to release to Him
- E. Accepting God's mercy for yourself, will release you from shame, pain & pride
1. Then you will be able to offer mercy to others
 2. Without pretending or excusing, whether it is deserved or not
 3. Forgiveness leads to empathy & understanding them
- F. Holding onto anger & resentment release stress hormones when that person comes to mind
1. these lead to stress and anxiety & dampen creativity
 2. Resentment is the poison you drink when someone else hurts you
- G. Most of Satan's gains in our life are due to unforgiveness
- H. Healing can't be rushed, it's a long distance run & takes time

- I. Forgiveness doesn't mean there won't be consequences, it just means that you don't have to be the one who divies out punishment
- J. Forgiveness gives the opportunity for the relationship to be as good as it can be
- K. Learning to live with the attitude of forgiveness is freeing and saturates your life with happiness
- L. We all need work in this area, but our King is working with us in forgiveness & takes Pleasure in the mercy & forgiveness that we offer to others

IV. Let me close by offering these 4 action points to ponder –

- A. You can't forgive what you won't face
- B. Forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting (only letting go)
- C. Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling
- D. Forgiveness sets you free

Works Cited:

Mayo Clinic
Robert Enright
Psychology Today
The Holy Bible