



## “FORGIVENESS” Matthew 18:21-35

(High Road) Truth → Forgiveness → Love (Life)  
BROKENNESS  
(Low Road) Lies → Unforgiveness → Bitterness (Death)

Brokenness can lead to bitterness when we allow the wound to be filled with the poison of unforgiveness. Forgiven people are forgiving people. Matt.5:12, 14-15

### FORGIVENESS IS NOT...

- **A Feeling**— you will never feel like forgiving and you don't have to. 2Cor.5:7
- **Excusing**—it is not tolerating bad behavior or pretending what someone did was not so bad. Matt.18:15
- **Forgetting**—there is a difference between recalling an offense and reliving it. Phil.3:13-14; Pro.14:16
- **Reconciling**—it only takes one to forgive but it takes two to reconcile. Matt.18:15; Rom.12:18
- **Trusting**—it can't be demanded but must be earned over time based on performance. Matt.18:15-17; Titus3:10

### FORGIVENESS IS...

- **A Decision**—it is an act of the will based on faith and not feelings to call on God to change my heart. Matt.18:21-22
- **A Process**—I need to keep practicing forgiveness every time I see or think of my offender. 2Cor.10:3-5; Stages of Grief: Denial->Anger->Bargaining->Sorrow->Acceptance

- **Canceling a debt**—You give up the right to hurt the person back. Rom.12:14-15
- **Absorbing the cost yourself.** John 3:16; 1John 3:16
- **Trusting that God will settle the score.** Rom.12:19-21
- **Giving what you have received from God.** Matt.18:21-35; Heb.12:15

The more we contemplate the tremendous debt God forgave us through the Cross of Christ, the more we will find the grace we need to forgive others!

### Growing Notes

- 1) Brokenness can lead to bitterness when we allow the wound to be filled with the poison of unforgiveness. Explain. What role does forgiveness play in our becoming whole in a broken world (Matt.5:12, 14-15)?
- 2) Read Matthew 18:21-35. What stands out to you from this text? What was Jesus' answer to Peter's question (vv21-22)? Why do you think Jesus told this parable (vv23-35, Note context: vv15-20)? What are some past hurts that you are currently working through?
- 3) Review the list and cross references of what Forgiveness is NOT. Which one(s) on this list were the most helpful? Explain. Why is it important to know what forgiveness is not?
- 4) Review the list and cross references of what Forgiveness IS. Which one(s) are strengths and which one(s) are growth areas? What are some next steps you can begin to take to become a more forgiving person?
- 5) The more we understand the tremendous debt God forgave us, the more we will find the grace we need to forgive others. Explain. What happens if we don't forgive others (vv34-35; Heb.12:15)? Pray Matthew 5:12.