

# THE PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT

**Biblical Passages:** Matthew 18:21-35

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What makes romantic comedies different from other types of movies, such as love stories? Almost every romantic comedy has the same formula: guy meets girl, they fall in love, guy does something dumb, girl gets mad, guy apologizes, and they live happily ever after. While the simple act of asking for forgiveness is not sufficient to bring them back together. They are reconciled when the girl eventually forgives him at some point. Ultimately, there is power in asking for forgiveness. The opposite is true as well—there is power in the act of forgiveness.

Above all else, there is power in accepting God's forgiveness. Read Mathew 18:21-35. In this parable, Jesus perfectly described how forgiveness is intended to be contagious. When the king forgave his servant of a debt that he would never have been able to repay, the king was showing his power through forgiveness. The assumption by the king was that this servant would go and live a life that was characterized by forgiveness as well. However, this servant remained in his selfish ways. This servant missed the point of forgiveness. Forgiveness is more than an event; it is intended to be a lifestyle. After recognizing that forgiveness was granted to him, the servant should have forgiven the ones who owed him as well. Once a person's burdens have been lifted from his shoulders, he should desire to lift the burdens from others as well. This servant never understood this truth.

As followers of Christ, we have been forgiven the greatest debt ever through the blood of Jesus. Our sins weighed us down because they represented a debt we could never pay. When we accept the forgiveness that comes with Jesus' death, that burden is lifted and we experience the freedom of forgiveness. We then have the freedom to forgive others as well. Has each member of your family accepted this freedom? Are you forgiving others in response to the forgiveness you have received?

## CONNECTION QUESTIONS

1. What did the servant's actions reveal about the condition of his heart?
2. Do you find it easier to seek forgiveness or to extend forgiveness? Why?
3. How should receiving forgiveness from Jesus change the way we respond to those who seek forgiveness from us?
4. What is something you need to do this week in response to the fact that Jesus has forgiven you?