

God's Golden Rule

"We are to treat others the way God treats us."

Small Group Notes

Matthew 18:21-35 (niv)

... Understanding the Parable

1. Peter's raises a question of Jesus about forgiving a brother. (18:21)
2. Note Jesus' initial response to Peter's question. (18:22)
3. A king shows mercy to his servant by cancelling his huge debt. (18:23-27)
4. The servant in turn then refuses to cancel a fellow servant's petty debt. (18:28-30)
5. The king imposes that the huge debt owing now be repaid in full. (18:31-34)

... The Lessons from the Parable.

- We are all God's debtors (*Matthew 18:23; Romans 3:23*)
- None of us are able to pay what is owed (*Matthew 18:25*)
- But by Christ's atoning sacrifice, the debt is paid (*Matthew 18:27; 20:28*)
- Only those who are willing to forgive others can be assured that they are indeed forgiven (*Matthew 18:35; 6:14-15*)
- It should be easier to forgive others, in view of what we owe God is infinitely more than what others owe us (*Matthew 18:32-33*)
- The unforgiving person is destined for everlasting punishment! (*Matthew 18:34-35; Romans 1:31*)

... Developing a Forgiving Attitude

1. Focus on God's Forgiveness of us.

Note how Paul suggested we develop a forgiving spirit.
(*Ephesians 4:32 Colossians 3:13*)

2. Allow the Lord to help us to Forgive and Forget.

- a. The example of Joseph (*Genesis 41:51*)
- b. The attitude of Paul (*Philippians 3:13*)

Both these men had plenty of things done to them that could have made them resentful, but God helped them to “*forget*” those things. By remembering the offense but preventing it from being constantly in their mind tearing them up.

True forgiveness is when we forgive and the sting of pain the offence has caused is not felt when we remember it. When this happens we are able to forget the offense (*although it is always there in the background*) but in this we can remove it from constantly tormenting us in our mind.

... Discussion

In **Matthew 6:14-15** it says that we are to forgive those who have wronged us as God has forgiven us. Depending on the degree of hurt the offence has caused, forgiving that person can be just too hard to do. And we may feel justified in feeling they don't deserve forgiveness!

Discuss how we can come to the place of forgiving the person who has wronged us. What has God got to do within us before we can forgive them?

Is there a case that we decide to forgive them in our mind and then allow our heart to catch up whilst we allow the soothing hand of God to heal us?

Some believe that when you forgive a person of their wrongdoing that you then should trust them immediately. Is this reasonable? Discuss this.

Should trust be earned or just given?

Should there be some accountability measures put in place before trust is given? If so, then is this in keeping with God's grace and forgiveness He has shown us?

Others say that when we forgive we should forget?

Is this reasonable in view of someone who has been physically abused?

How can you forget?

In your notes above in ***allow the Lord to help us to Forgive and Forget***, look at the examples given and the added comments and discuss this and see what conclusions you come to as a group.