

**A TIME TO HEAL**  
"A Time to Release"  
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Matthew 18:21-35 (ESV)

**WHAT FORGIVENESS IS:**

To forgive is to **RELEASE** an offender from the liability to suffer punishment or penalty for what he or she has done.

**THE BASIS FOR FORGIVENESS**

1. It is not based on the offender's merit for it is an act of **GRACE**.
2. It is not based on my **FEELINGS**.
3. Instead, it is based on how much **I HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN BY GOD**. (Matthew 18:21-35)
  - Forgiveness is possible when I change my perspective from how I've been wronged to how I've been forgiven.
  - Grace received demands that grace be given.
  - The height of hypocrisy is to accept grace from God, yet be unwilling to give grace to my offender (Matthew 18:35; 6:12; 6:14-15)

**PRACTICING FORGIVENESS**

1. "I will no longer **DWELL** on this incident"
2. "I will not **BRING UP** this incident again and use it against you."
3. "I will not **TALK** to others about this incident."
4. "I will not allow this incident to **STAND BETWEEN** us."

**LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Going Deeper into the Message**

1. Who are your heroes of forgiveness? List three. Share with the group one person whom you think most people would know.
2. *"To forgive is to release an offender from the liability to suffer punishment or penalty for what he or she has done."* What is your initial reaction to the concept of forgiveness? What makes forgiving offenders most difficult for you?
3. Do you believe that forgiveness is always, in all cases, required?
4. Carefully read Matthew 18:21-35. What explanation is given for why the servant who owed 10,000 talents should have forgiven the servant who owed him 100 denarii? [a talent = 20 yrs. wages; a denarius = one day's wage] How does this truth speak to you?
5. Read Matthew 18:35; 6:12; 6:14-15. What is the common theme and what implications does it have for you?
6. How does unforgiveness hurt you? How does forgiveness bless you?
7. Which among the four promises is most difficult for you in practicing forgiveness (see notes)?

**Responding to the Message**

8. Picture the person who has caused you the most hurt. Imagine forgiving that person, and write down what that would look like. Share with others.
9. What one insight from the message seems most personally significant to you right now, and how would you like this truth to affect your life (i.e., your thoughts, attitudes, habits, conduct)?
10. What action can you take in the next week to start putting this into practice or to cooperate with God in bringing about this transformation?

**CENTRAL TRUTH:**

Forgiveness is possible when I change my perspective from how I've been wronged to how I've been forgiven.