



Individual Responsibility for Forgiveness

Living in the Image of God
Module 03 Session 15

Banking Blessings Ministry
San Antonio, Texas
USA



Living in the Image of God

- God creates every person to represent him in interactions with others
- Be for others what God would be for them if he lived with us in human form
- He provides resources for people to perform the responsibilities and blesses those that do

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Living in the Image of God

- Program seeks to understand the meaning, resources, and human responsibilities and benefits of *Living in the Image of God*
- Meaning
- Resources
- Human responsibilities
- Benefits

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What We Will Learn

- God expects you to forgive those that repent from their sin against you
- Same way he forgives you when you repent
- Guide them to repentance
- If they don't repent on their initiative

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What We Will Learn cont'd

- He promises severe punishment for those that fail to forgive others
- Christ teaching
- Parable of the Unmerciful Servant
- Matthew 18:23–35

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Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

- Human interactions regarding debt
- Human relationship with God regarding forgiveness of sin
- A king cancels debt of a servant
- Attracted severe penalty
- Servant acknowledged the debt
- And begged for mercy
- Matthew 18:23–27

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23 “Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him.

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25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

26 “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’

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27 The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

- Servant acknowledged debt and begged for mercy
- Large debt emphasizes masters' mercy
- Cancelling the debt was an act of compassion

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- Recipient of king's mercy denies same to fellow servant that owes him
- Shows creditor wickedness on small debt
- Did not care that debtor acknowledged debt and begged for mercy
- Did not care his own debt was forgiven
- Matthew 18:28–30

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28 “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.

He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

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29 “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

30 “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt.

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The Unmerciful Servant

- Debtor acknowledged debt. Begged for mercy
- Creditor refused and insisted on full punishment
- Did not show mercy as was shown to him
- Declined call to forgiveness
- Declined call to compassion

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Cont'd: Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

- King rescinds mercy for unmerciful servant
- Because he denied mercy to a fellow servant
- King recalled his debt and punished him for failing to pay
- Matthew 18:31–35

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Matthew 18 (NIV)

31 When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32 “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to.’

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Matthew 18 (NIV)

33 Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’

34 In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

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Matthew 18 (NIV)

35 “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

- Forgive others that repent
- As God forgives you when you repent

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Matthew 18 (NIV)

- King recalled debt, insisted on full punishment
- Because unmerciful servant refused to show mercy as had been shown to him
- Forgive those that repent from their sin against you
- As God forgives you when you repent from your sin

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What We Learned

- God expects you to forgive those that repent from their sin against you
- Same way he forgives you when you repent
- Repentance establishes a call for forgiveness
- The same way that a need establishes a call to compassion
- God rewards those that forgive, in the same way he rewards those that complete responsibility in call to compassion
- He promises punishment for those that decline a call for forgiveness
- Based on Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

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Individual Responsibility for Forgiveness

Living in the Image of God M03S15

Christ teaching in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant uses human interactions regarding debt to teach human relationship with God regarding forgiveness of sin. Forgive those that repent from sin they committed against you, the same way that God forgives you when you repent. Repentance establishes a call for forgiveness, as the need of another person establishes a call to compassion. God rewards a person that accepts a call for forgiveness but promises punishment for the one that declines. The same way he rewards those that complete responsibility in a call to compassion and promises punishment for those that decline.

We discuss Christ teaching in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant to understand that God expects you to forgive those that repent from sin they committed against you, the same way he forgives you when you repent. To perform the responsibility, accept repentance from others and forgive them. Also, as we discuss in a previous study under [Responding to Sin](#), guide the others to repentance if they don't repent on their own initiative (Matthew 18:15–17) and forgive them if they repent.

In addition to laying down the requirement to forgive those that repent, the parable describes the consequences for denying forgiveness. God's promise of punishment for those that fail to forgive others is described in the parable through a king rescinding his initial grant of mercy to a servant after he was informed that the servant denied mercy to a fellow servant: "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart" [Matthew 18:35].

We discuss the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant to understand (i) God's mandate to every person to forgive those that repent from any misdeed or undesirable action they committed against you and (ii) his promise of punishment for those that refuse to forgive.

Parable of the Unmerciful Servant: Debt Cancelled

In the parable, Christ uses human interactions regarding debt to teach human relationship with God regarding forgiveness of sin. The parable begins with a king cancelling the debt of one of his servants. The debt was large such that a payment default would attract severe penalty: "Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt" [Matthew 18:25]. However, the servant acknowledged the debt and begged for mercy [Matthew 18:26]: "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.'" The servant's behavior in acknowledging the debt and begging for mercy represents repentance.

The king showed mercy and cancelled the debt, not minding the size of debt: "The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go" [Matthew 18:25]. The king's response of cancelling the debt not minding the size of debt represents forgiveness; the same way that God forgives sinners that repent, irrespective of the sin. Also, cancelling the debt was an act of compassion. Repentance establishes a call for forgiveness; the same way that the need of another person establishes a call for compassion.

Servant Denies Mercy to Another

In the second event of the parable, the servant that received mercy from the king denied mercy to another servant that owes him. He showed himself wicked in denying mercy regarding a small debt. He did not care that the debtor acknowledged the debt and begged for mercy. Also, he did not care that his own debt to the king was cancelled on account of mercy by the king.

The debtor acknowledged the debt and begged for mercy. "His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back'" [Matthew 18:29]. The debtor's behavior in acknowledging the debt and begging for mercy represents repentance and established a call for forgiveness. However, the creditor refused and insisted on full punishment for the debtor [Matthew 18:30]: "But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt." The creditor's behavior represents a refusal to forgive a person that repented. He did not show mercy as was shown to him. He declined a call to forgive, thus declining a call to compassion.

King Rescinds Mercy to Punish Servant

The king heard about the wickedness of the unmerciful servant and rescinded his cancellation of debt owed to him by the servant. The unmerciful servant did not show mercy as the king had shown to him earlier. Therefore, the king recalled his debt and punished the unmerciful servant for failing to pay: "In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed" [Matthew 18:34].

A clear lesson based on the parable is that God expects you to forgive those that repent from sin they committed against you and will punish those that refuse to forgive.

Call for Forgiveness

Repentance establishes a call for forgiveness the same way that the need of another person establishes a call to compassion. As we discuss in a previous study under [Responsibility in Call to Compassion](#), God blesses those that complete responsibility regarding a call to compassion and punishes those that decline the responsibility. Similarly, he blesses those that forgive others that sin against them and repent but punishes those that refuse to forgive despite repentance. The behavior of the unmerciful servant in the parable illustrates a refusal to forgive despite repentance. Also, the response of the king in punishing the unmerciful servant illustrates God's punishment of a person that refuses to forgive another person despite repentance.

Summary of What We Learned

Christ teaching in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant uses human interactions regarding debt to teach human relationship with God regarding forgiveness of sin. Forgive those that repent from sin they committed against you, the same way that God forgives you when you repent. Repentance establishes a call for forgiveness, as the need of another person establishes a call to compassion. God rewards a person that accepts a call for forgiveness but promises punishment for the one that declines. The same way he rewards those that complete responsibility in a call to compassion and promises punishment for those that decline.