

How Often Should I Forgive Someone?

Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?

MATTHEW 18:21

Written by Bill Perkins

That's a question most of us
have asked God.

How many times
do I forgive someone
who keeps wounding me?

How long do I keep trying?
Where is the line?
When is enough enough?

Peter asked the question
we all ask.

And Jesus answered him
quickly
and completely outside
the limits Peter expected.

"I do not say to you up to seven times,
but up to seventy times seven."
Matthew 18:22

Jesus was not giving a number.
He was revealing
the heart of God.

You may not know this
about Jesus-

When He said
"seventy times seven,"
He was drawing from the Scriptures
He knew by heart.

Psalm 103:10-12 says
God does not deal with us
according to our sins
and removes them
as far as the east is from the west.

Micah says
God delights in mercy
and casts our sins
into the depths of the sea.
Micah 7:18-19

Isaiah says
though our sins are like scarlet,
God makes them white as snow.
Isaiah 1:18

Psalm 130 says
if God kept score,
no one could stand,
but with Him there is forgiveness.
Psalm 130:3-4

Jesus knew these passages.
Jesus lived these passages.
Jesus revealed these passages.

And He was teaching Peter-
and teaching us-
that forgiveness
is not based on the one who sinned,
but on the One who forgives.

Not on the size of the offense,
but on the size of God's mercy.

Not on how many times
we have been wronged,
but on how many times
God has forgiven us.

Which is:
without limit.

If forgiveness feels impossible,
you are closer to Jesus
than you think.

He does His best work
where our strength ends.

Unlimited forgiveness begins
with receiving His mercy again,
letting His compassion steady us,
and trusting that His grace
is greater than the wound we carry.

Here is what Jesus wants you to know-

He never commands
unlimited forgiveness
without first giving
unlimited mercy.

Forgiveness begins
not with our willingness,
but with His.

Not with our strength,
but with His mercy.

Not with our love,
but with His.