

PRAYING IS AN OPPORTUNITY TO FORGIVE AND BE FORGIVEN

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

PRAYER

FORGIVE

FORGIVENESS

ANSWERS

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Matthew 6: 12, 18:21-35

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children understand that God answers our prayers when we ask for forgiveness and forgive those around us

MEMORY VERSE

"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one'" (Matthew 6:9-13, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

In the study passage (Matthew 18: 21-35), Peter asks, "Lord, how many times should I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Seven times?" While seven was a number of perfection among the Jews, Peter does not use it in this sense.

Among the Jews, it was a rule to not forgive someone more than three times. Revenge is natural in people who are vindictive; and therefore it is very difficult for them to forgive offenses.

In v. 22, the Lord expands the number of times we should forgive: seventy times seven. There is something very remarkable in these words, especially if they are related to Genesis 4:24 where they are used exactly the same. "If Cain shall be avenged seven times, Lamech seventy times seven." The righteous God punished sin in an exemplary manner.

Sinful man is exposed to divine justice, and therefore should be forgiving in abundance, especially because only the merciful obtain mercy. When Jesus tells Peter "seventy times seven," he wants him to know that he should always be willing to forgive. In the passage of the two debtors, Jesus tells a parable to them to show them the connection between the kingdom of heaven and

forgiveness.

Ten thousand talents (v. 24) is calculated as approximately 60 million silver coins.

When ordering the man (v. 25), along with his wife and children, the Lord refers here to an ancient Hebrew custom of selling a man and his family to collect debts. We see this in Exodus 22: 3; Leviticus 25:39, 47; and 2 Kings 4:1.

In v. 26, the servant asks, "Have patience with me and I'll pay it all" (Matthew 18:26). This shows us his need for forgiveness. In v. 27, we note that the source of salvation for a lost world is God's eternal mercy and compassion.

However in v. 28, the servant who had been forgiven would not forgive the person who owed him, and so he put that man into jail for the debt of a hundred silver coins. In v. 30, the attitude of humans is presented. God does not show mercy to those who do not show mercy. This is an eternal purpose of the Lord that no one can change. What God does with us is what he teaches us to do with our neighbor.

In v. 34, the servant is delivered to the torturers. This does not only refer to continued imprisonment, but the torture that accompanies it.

Jesus finished teaching by saying what his heavenly Father will do to us (v. 35). The kindness that God shows toward us is the pattern that we should follow in our relationship with others.

In the Lord's Prayer when the Lord says, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," it makes us reflect on how we were freely forgiven, and how we must in turn freely forgive others.

Forgiving seems simple, but it is difficult to heal the pain of offenses. We cannot forget or erase from our minds what happened, but we can ask the Lord to heal us. There will be a scar, but no pain or resentment needs to remain in our hearts once the Holy Spirit heals the wound. Only he changes the heart.

Often, forgiveness is not as simple as accepting an apology from someone who asks for our forgiveness. This can only be achieved if we believe that God can change it.

People are accustomed to getting revenge for the wrongs done to them. Compassion, mercy and forgiveness is a testament of the love of Christ in the heart; and with this, we can impact others, because it shows that, we are the true children of God. The best medicine for healing the wounds of offenses is the love of God in one's heart.

Tell your children the importance of the forgiveness of God for us, and our forgiveness to our neighbors. Perhaps some children have resentment toward their parents for how they treated them. Think about the problems children may be dealing with and reflect on those points. Pray with them if you see a need. Remember that you are their spiritual guide, and you have been given the great privilege of caring for them.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Introduction

Prepare the room in advance and receive the children at the door, welcoming each one by name.

Ask, "Who prayed for what their partner wrote last week? Did anyone of you pray to God presenting a need?" (Have them share if God answered their prayers.)

Read the biblical story, "The unforgiving servant." Guide the children during session by reading it aloud. Clarify some situations or words that are not easily understood. (Allow children to ask questions.)

If possible write the letters of the word "FORGIVENESS" (e.g. "SOERIFVESNG") on the blackboard or a large paper out of order. Challenge the children to find what word they can form with these letters. When they find it, ask its meaning.

Say: "How many times do you think you can forgive someone who offends you?" (After they answer, read the Bible story together.)

TEACH THE LESSON

The unforgiving servant

"Mom, how long do I have to forgive my brother?"

You are not the first to ask this. Did you know that Peter also did? He approached Jesus and asked him, "Lord, if a brother of the

church does something against me, how often should I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven." We must forgive again and again; that is, forever. And for the disciples to understand this better, Jesus told them a parable:

The Kingdom of God works like something that happened some time in a faraway country. A king summoned his employees to inform him what they owed him. When he started checking accounts, he saw an employee who owed him a lot of money. Since the employee did not have any money to pay his debt, the king ordered him to be sold as a slave, along with his wife and children, and also to sell everything he had. This was so he could start paying back the debt with the money made.

But the employee knelt before the king and begged:

"Lord, have patience with me and I'll pay you everything." The king felt sorry for his employee and said, "Go quietly. I forgive you all that you owe me."

Leaving the palace of the king, that employee met a fellow who owed him 100 silver coins. He grabbed him by the neck and said, "Pay me back what you owe me."

This fellow knelt before him and begged, "Give me a little more time and I'll pay you!" But he refused and put him in jail until he paid the money he owed. Another fellow, seeing what had happened, went to tell the king. Then the king asked to see the evil employee and said, "How wicked you are! I forgave all that you owed me because you begged me. Why do you not have mercy on the other man as I had on you?"

The king was furious and ordered that the employee be punished until he paid all that was due. Jesus concluded: "So will my Father in heaven deal with each of you unless you forgive your brother sincerely."

CONNECT THE LESSON

Review

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #294-A, #294-B and #294-C. Use these activities to review and confirm the lesson.

The right help at the right time

Give the children a few minutes to study the drawing in Student Activity Sheet #294-A before doing what it says on the bottom of the page.

Say: "Study the scene, and then connect the people who are threatened with the person who has the tools to help rescue them. People who have done wrong also need to be rescued."

Ask, "Why do you need to rescue people who have done wrong? What is in common between the people who do not have a relationship with Jesus and the people in the picture?" (They need someone to do something for them that they cannot do by themselves.) "How can you forgive those who have done wrong?"

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Review the memory verses, encouraging the children to repeat them twice. Write this week's memory verse and have them read the words as you point them out. Dramatize the activity by changing the volume. Start by reading really softly and then louder.

Did you forgive?

Distribute Student Activity Sheet #294-D entitled "Did you forgive?" Guide the students in answering the questions.

WRAP-UP

Pray

At the end of the session, pray with the children that God will help them forgive others who have wronged them.

Encourage

Thank your children for their attendance and encourage them not to forget what they learned.

Invite

Announce something about the next session to increase the group's interest. Remind them to welcome new friends.