

Lesson 18: Teaching on Forgiveness

Objective: To know that we must learn to forgive others as God has forgiven us.

Background: For months Jesus had retired from Galilee to be alone with the disciples in order to prepare them for His coming death (Review Lessons 16 & 17). Upon their return from their second retirement, Jesus gave the disciples an important teaching on personal relationships (Matthew 18). This teaching marked the end of Jesus' retirement ministry and the Galilean ministry.

Instruction: Read Matthew 17:24-18:35 once before you study 18:15-35.

Let's Think: Ask the Lord Jesus to speak to you as you study and think.

1. In dealing with an offender within a church, a community of believers
 - a. What specific steps did Jesus outline in Mt 18: 15-17? List them in order .
 - b. What should be the goal of church discipline? Substantiate your answer.(Mt 18:15; also Gal. 2:11-14).
2. Discuss the following questions in the light of Mt 18: 15-20:
 - a. Should the community of faith (church) "condone" sins? Why or why not?
 - b. Is a "condemning" attitude commended? Why or why not?
 - c. What is the wisdom and advantage of a "direct personal" approach? (Mt 18: 15).
 - d. What responsibility, authority, and assurance do the body of believers have? (Mt 18: 17 -20).
3. How have/has you and your church dealt with sin and offenders within the fellowship?
What one thing do you think should be implemented in your church in the light of Jesus' teaching?
Why?
4. What was Peter's question that called forth the Parable of Unmerciful Servant? (Mt 18: 21-22).
5. Read over carefully the Parable before answering the following questions:
 - a. What is the probability for the two debtors to pay back their debts? Explain
 - b. How was the first debtor treated by his creditor, the king? (Mt 18: 23-27) Did he treat his debtor, a fellow servant, as he was treated (by the king)? Explain. (Mt 18: 27-30).
 - c. Does the law "we reap what we sow" prove true in the end? How? (Mt 18: 31-34; Gal. 6:7).
6. What is the central point of the parable? How does it answer Peter's question? (Mt 18:35).
7. Does a person truly forgive who says, "I forgive, but I will never forget"? Give reasons for your answer. Is there an old "wound" in your life which hasn't been dealt with? What would you do in the light of what you have learned?

Let's Remember: "So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you if you do not forgive your brother from your heart." (Matthew 18:35).