

# Freedom

Our Priorities: Love God, Love one another, Live the mission

Current series: Love one another (John 13:34 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you...")

## HOW TO love one another:

1. Love Jesus
2. Befriend the confused
3. Esteem one another
4. Edify one another
5. Forgive

**Matthew 6:14** "For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

<sup>15</sup> "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

**Matthew 19:21** Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?"

<sup>22</sup> Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

<sup>23</sup> "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.

<sup>24</sup> "And when he had begun to settle *them*, there was brought to him one who owed him ten thousand talents.

<sup>25</sup> "But since he did not have *the means* to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made.

<sup>26</sup> "The slave therefore falling down, prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will repay you everything.'

<sup>27</sup> "And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt.

<sup>28</sup> "But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and *began* to choke *him*, saying, 'Pay back what you owe.'

<sup>29</sup> "So his fellow slave fell down and *began* to entreat him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.'

<sup>30</sup> "He was unwilling however, but went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed.

<sup>31</sup> "So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened.

<sup>32</sup> "Then summoning him, his lord said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you entreated me.

<sup>33</sup> 'Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, even as I had mercy on you?'

<sup>34</sup> "And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.

<sup>35</sup> "So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

## How to forgive:

### 1. Follow Jesus' example

**1 Peter 3:21** For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,  
<sup>22</sup> who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth;  
<sup>23</sup> and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

**Ephesians 4:31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

<sup>32</sup> And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

**5:1** Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children;

<sup>2</sup> and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

### 2. Consider my own need of forgiveness

**Romans 2:1** Therefore you are without excuse, every man *of you* who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

<sup>2</sup> And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

<sup>3</sup> And do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?

<sup>4</sup> Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

### 3. Try to understand the offender

**Colossians 3:12** And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

<sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

**4. Base forgiveness on grace alone**

**5. Choose to release the debt and the offender to God**

**Romans 12:14** Bless those who persecute you; bless and curse not.

...<sup>17</sup> Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.

<sup>18</sup> If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

<sup>19</sup> Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath *of God*, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

<sup>20</sup> "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head."

<sup>21</sup> Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

**6. Trust debt collection to God**

**7. Don't confuse interpersonal and institutional forgiveness**

**8. Act on forgiveness = do what love dictates**

**9. Remember that God has good purposes in this challenge**

**10. Remember the blessing of forgiving and the high cost of unforgiveness**