



THEME

Honest Attempts @ Following Jesus > **Running toward the Hurt > Forgiveness + Reconciliation**

ANCHORED TO TRUTH

Colossians 3:12-14, **Acts 9:10-19**, Luke 6:27-36, Luke 6:37-38, **Matthew 18:21-34**, **2 Corinthians 5:18-20**

CONVERSATION

1. Check out the story in **Matthew 18:21-34**

Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!

"Therefore, the Kingdom of Heaven can be compared to a king who decided to bring his accounts up to date with servants who had borrowed money from him. In the process, one of his debtors was brought in who owed him millions of dollars. He couldn't pay, so his master ordered that he be sold—along with his wife, his children, and everything he owned—to pay the debt. "But the man fell down before his master and begged him, 'Please, be patient with me, and I will pay it all.' Then his master was filled with pity for him, and he released him and forgave his debt. "But when the man left the king, he went to a fellow servant who owed him a few thousand dollars. He grabbed him by the throat and demanded instant payment. "His fellow servant fell down before him and begged for a little more time. 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it,' he pleaded. But his creditor wouldn't wait. He had the man arrested and put in prison until the debt could be paid in full.

"When some of the other servants saw this, they were very upset. They went to the king and told him everything that had happened. Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, 'You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn't you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?' Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. "That's what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart."

2. Is the scenario above pretty accurate > we all want (need) forgiveness but struggle to give it?
 - a. Why is retaliation or holding a grudge easier than forgiveness?
 - b. Is there one characteristic/ flaw we have that most often keeps us from forgiving others?
3. Based on the story above > why is God **not** more understanding about our struggle to forgive others?
4. What's God's goal in asking us to forgive > what does he want to see happen in our heart & relationships?
5. Check out > **2 Corinthians 5:18-20**

And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ. And God has given us this task of reconciling people to him. For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. So we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, "Come back to God!" For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

6. What's a good definition for "**reconciliation**"?
 - a. How about "**ambassador**"?
 - b. How would you describe what God is asking us to do & become in these verses?
7. If we don't make an honest attempt at being this kind of ambassador > what's the predicted outcome in our life & relationships?
8. Bottom line > is the 'heavy lifting' necessary to move from retaliation to reconciliation #worthit?

RESPOND:

- > We know forgiveness is tough because we're bad at it > what kind of help do we need from God to be good at it?
- > What kind of help do we need from one another to be better at reconciliation?
- > Is there someone you need to forgive or ask for forgiveness from? Can we make that attempt this week?
- > Take time to **pray for** & encourage each other about all the things you've just explored
 - Pray for Chi Alpha > that as individuals & as a community > we'd make the honest attempts necessary to escape anger & bitterness > and reach for forgiveness & reconciliation?
 - Ask for the help/change we need from God & his Spirit to make those attempts possible?