

## How to Ruin Relationships And Restore Them God's Way

Lesson Four • Matthew 18:21-35

### Hold a Grudge

#### Gotta Grudge?

To ruin relationships, HOLD a grudge through unforgiveness.  
To restore relationships, LET GO of your grudge through forgiveness.

*"This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven...forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors'...For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." Matthew 6:9, 12, 14-15 NIV*

#### Peter and Jesus on Forgiveness

### 1. Peter's Position Is LIMITED Forgiveness!

#### Peter's Question:

"Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? SEVEN times?"  
*Matthew 18:21 NLT*

#### Three Common Excuses We Use for Limited Forgiveness:

- "The hurt is too BIG; I can't possibly forgive something that big!"
- "Time will HEAL the pain; I don't have to forgive."
- "If I forgive, they'll just do it AGAIN."

### 2. Jesus' Position Is UNLIMITED Forgiveness!

#### Jesus' Answer:

"No, not seven times, but SEVENTY times seven."  
*Matthew 18:22 NLT*

#### The Parable: Why Must I Forgive?

### 1. I Must Forgive Because GOD Has Forgiven Me!

- In Christ, we have RECEIVED extravagant forgiveness from God. *Matthew 18:23-27*
- As Christ-followers, we now EXTEND extravagant forgiveness to others. *Matthew 18:28-30*

### 2. I Must Forgive Because Unforgiveness Is Too COSTLY!

- Unforgiveness SHATTERS relationships. *Matthew 18:28-30*
- Unforgiveness has TORTUROUS consequences on my life. *Matthew 18:32-35*

#### The Defining Mark of God's Forgiveness:

Forgiven people FORGIVE!

*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. Ephesians 4:32 NIV*

*Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3:13 NIV*

#### Who do you need to forgive? Three Tests:

- 1) Blame Test: Are you blaming someone for your unhappiness and hurt in life?
- 2) Bitterness Test: Are you keeping score against someone who hurt you?
- 3) Behavior Test: Are you acting differently because of resentment?

Like the merciful king, tell the one who hurt you, *"I choose to release you from the pain that resulted when you injured me. You don't owe me anything. I forgive you."*