

# Finding Healing Through Forgiveness

**Text: Matthew 5:23 - 24 and 18:21 - 35**

<sup>23</sup>“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

## Introduction

*Forgiveness is a required course in the curriculum of the Christian life.* It isn't an elective, though most of us wish it were because the exams are always tough. If you've ever gone through the process of seeking forgiveness from someone or giving forgiveness to someone, you know how difficult it can be. But nothing offers more healing than a forgiving spirit. And because all of us have someone we need to forgive or have something we need to be forgiven for, all of us need this healing spirit of forgiveness.

## I. Moving Forward Requires us to Deal with our Regrets (Matthew 5:23 - 24)

<sup>23</sup>“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, <sup>24</sup>leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

**A. When we have offended/wronged someone, we are to stop our worship, go and seek reconciliation, and then return to our worship.**

**B. A right heart with God requires a right heart with others.**

Forgiving does not erase the bitter past. A healed memory is not a deleted memory. Instead, forgiving what we cannot forget creates a new way to remember. We change the memory of our past into a hope for our future. Lewis B. Smedes - [www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/l/lewis\\_b\\_smedes.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/l/lewis_b_smedes.html)

## II. Moving Forward Requires us to Find Healing through Forgiveness (Matthew 18:21 - 35)

<sup>21</sup>Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?” <sup>22</sup>Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. <sup>23</sup>“Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. <sup>24</sup>As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags

of gold was brought to him. <sup>25</sup> Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

<sup>26</sup> “At this the servant fell on his knees before him. ‘Be patient with me,’ he begged, ‘and I will pay back everything.’ <sup>27</sup> The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

<sup>28</sup> “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded. <sup>29</sup> “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

<sup>30</sup> “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. <sup>31</sup> When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

<sup>32</sup> “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. <sup>33</sup> Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ <sup>34</sup> In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

<sup>35</sup> “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

**A. When we have been offended, we are to forgive OR the Lord will turn us over to inner torment until we forgive.**

**B. Not forgiving only hurts us.**

You will know that forgiveness has begun when you recall those who hurt you and feel the power to wish them well. Lewis B. Smedes -[www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/l/lewis\\_b\\_smedes.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/l/lewis_b_smedes.html)

## Conclusion

To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was YOU. Lewis B. Smedes -  
[www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/l/lewis\\_b\\_smedes.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/l/lewis_b_smedes.html)

**Four practical principles on forgiveness are found here.**

1. For the offender: God is honored by immediate obedience to seek forgiveness,
2. and others are healed by vulnerable confession.
3. For the offended: to refuse to forgive is hypocritical,
4. and to refuse to forgive inflicts inner torment on yourself.

\*Adapted from an outline by Chuck Swindoll.