


WARM UP | It would be nice to think that as a Christian, forgiving others would be easy, but often it isn't and often the reasons lie deep. Speak to anyone abandoned as a child, who has been through a divorce or separation, who has been abused, robbed or victimised and so often issues of unforgiveness are close at hand. Sometimes the causes are raw and fresh, others can be decades old, yet the damage unforgiveness causes in the life of a Christian is significant.

 **READ** | Matthew 18:21-35

BACKGROUND |

There is no question that there were tensions among Jesus' disciples. Living and working together for prolonged periods of time always brings its challenges. While Peter, James and John seemed to comprise Jesus' acknowledged "inner-circle" as it were, the disciples continued to compete and jockey for position (e.g. Mark 9:34, Luke 22:24).

When such things happen in any group, offence is often given and taken. In Matthew 18:21 Peter comes to Jesus with an obvious degree of frustration. How many times did he have to forgive his brother sinning against him? We are not told the nature of the offences but we can safely assume they were ongoing.

In the following parable Jesus made it clear that forgiveness wasn't a situational option but an expectation in the light of God's unwarranted forgiveness. Peter had to choose between forgiveness (regardless of how he felt about it) and deliberate disobedience.



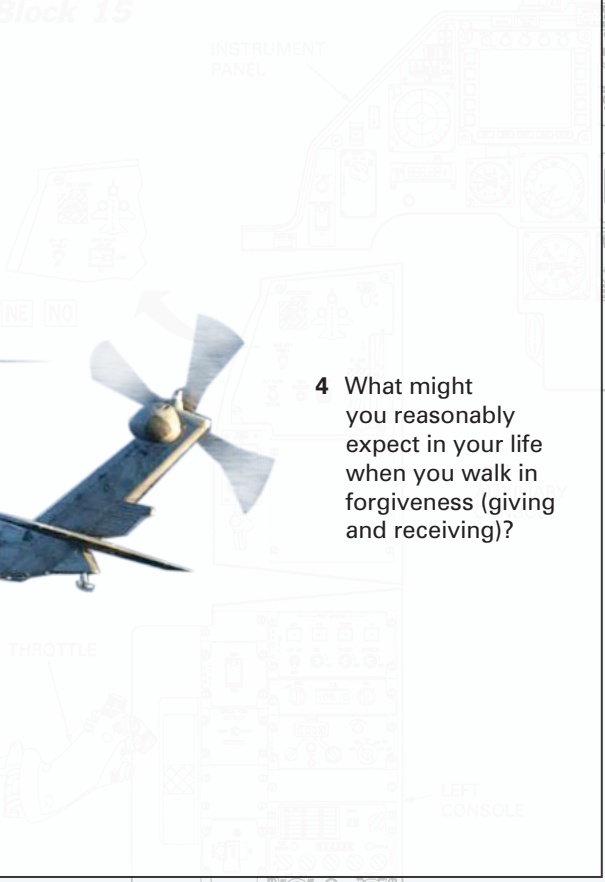
QUESTIONS |

- 1 What does our lack of forgiveness say about us?
- 2 Are there people in your life or past that you know you have not truly forgiven (deliberately or otherwise) – parents, relatives, schoolmates, workmates, others?



Cockpit Arrangement

3 Why might Peter have come to Jesus with this question?



4 What might you reasonably expect in your life when you walk in forgiveness (giving and receiving)?

MY RESPONSE AS A PROMISE KEEPER |

What do I need to apply from what I have learned from this study?

IT'S TIME FOR PRAYER |

CONSIDER THIS |

"Father, forgive us our sins as we forgive those that sin against us." Just how sincerely do we pray this prayer? Do we truly forgive from our hearts, completely and fully? Or are we selective in whom and in what situations we forgive? In Matthew 5:23-24 Jesus told His disciples that if they came to the altar and there recognised that their brother had something against them, to go and be reconciled with them before coming to the altar. How much more so when we carry the "thing" against someone else! When we forgive we let go all thoughts of revenge and resentment. In Romans 12:17-21, Paul encourages us to go even further, leaving appropriate vengeance to the Lord and instead doing good to our enemy. In doing so we may shame them into recognising their need for salvation and we overcome evil with good. We forgive as He first forgave us.

WRAP UP | When we forgive one another a huge burden is taken from our shoulders. God is faithful to deal appropriately with every situation and, in time, to bring about true justice. We can have confidence in giving Him everything - after all, He has already forgiven us.

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Figure 1-3. (Sheet 18)