

Study #9

Mark Beale

THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS

"This is how my heavenly Father will deal with you unless you each forgive your brother from your heart." Matt 18:35

WARM UP

The story is told in Spain of a father and his teenage son who had a relationship that had become strained. So the son ran away from home. His father, however, began a journey in search of his rebellious son. Finally, in Madrid, in a last desperate effort to find him, the father put an ad in the newspaper. The ad read: "Dear Paco, Meet me in front of the newspaper office at noon. All is forgiven. I love you. Your father. The next day at noon in front of the newspaper office 800 "Pacos" showed up. They were all seeking forgiveness and love from their fathers.



BACKGROUND

It was Rabbinic teaching that a man must forgive his brother three times. This is expressed in Amos chapters 1 & 2. From this we can see that God forgives three times but not for the fourth. Peter was going beyond what was expected, to forgive seven times, and so he probably expected to be commended for this. But the demand of Jesus is far greater.



READ Matthew 18:23-35

QUESTIONS FOR INTERACTION

1. All of us go through life having been hurt by others. Share with the group your experiences of this.
2. One of the hardest things to do is to forgive. Share with the group how you have been able to forgive.

3. Share with the group your experience of coming to faith and how the forgiveness of Jesus helped you live a new life.

4. Do you think that society is becoming more forgiving or demanding more retribution?

CONSIDER THIS

"He who cannot forgive others breaks the bridge over which he must pass himself." George Herbert



IT'S TIME FOR PRAYER



MY RESPONSE AS A PROMISE KEEPER

I will make a commitment to forgive as soon as a quarrel begins. As I pray each morning, I will ask the Lord to help me be more forgiving.



WRAP UP

As a group pray together for God's forgiveness, especially for all the people you have not forgiven.