

# Life in Community: The Path to Reconciliation Pt. 2

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Bible verses Matthew 18:21-35

Brett McBride

## Consider

The topics for last week and this revolve around relationships and those difficult circumstances which can develop in those relationships.

- **Discuss:** On a scale of one to 10 would you say you are a person who has experienced challenging relationships or 'not so much'. (1 being Not so much, 10 being extremely experienced)
- **Share:** Can you share a story from your life where a relationship has been restored?

## Let's Examine

***Read Matthew 18:21-35: Give time for each person to read it over several times for themselves. Encourage them to consider what questions come to mind.***

Many people in the church are familiar with Jesus' "70x7" response – we even quote it flippantly! However, the SHOCK of what Jesus said is lost on us because of our familiarity.

- **Discuss:** ***Brett said "...it is meant to display a mercy that is outrageous – limitless – so big it's not worth counting!"*** Is that how you have thought about it in the past, or is this a new thought for you? Why?

***"The whole story is designed to illustrate to us the Gospel of Jesus Christ – and the Grace that God has lavished upon us!" (Brett)*** Each of us needs to see ourselves in the man who owed an unpayable debt – 10 000 bags of gold! ***"The story is designed to educate us about ourselves, to teach us about our own poverty before the King of Heaven!"***

- **Discuss:** How does this description of you make you feel? How do you comprehend this truth? List words which expand your understanding of what it means to have "poverty before the King of Heaven." Are there other Bible verses which help you understand this truth about yourself?

***"If you take an honest look at some of the sins outlined in Scripture – and think back over your conduct this past week, month, or year – can you honestly say that you're without sin?"***

- **Discuss:** Read Brett's question and discuss it as a group. Specific confession of sin, on a certain level, is best done in the intimacy of a 1on1 or 1on2 relational conversation rather than shared to your whole Life Group (which some of you may wish to pursue in privacy with your Leader), however, in your group you may want to discuss the implications of this question in general for all of us.

The man is forgiven by the King and then goes out and demands from someone who owes him. ***"Seemingly, this man has what psychologists would describe as cognitive dissonance! ...He can't see the correlation between his own need of grace – and this man's need of grace!"***

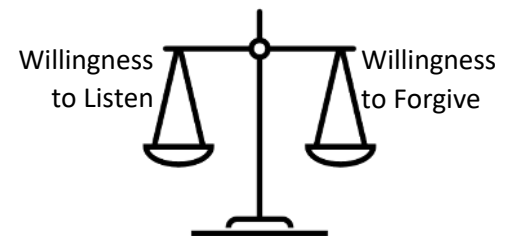
- **Discuss:** How do you see this in your own life? Why do we think this way?
- **Discuss:** How is this even more despicable when we consider the response of the man who owes the pieces of silver? Outline his response as a repentant person in steps. *“...if someone isn’t truly repentant and demonstrating a ‘dying to sinful patterns’, ‘burial of the old self’, and finding ‘new pathways of life’ that reflect the activity of Jesus in their lives – then they are demonstrating what the Bible describes as ‘worldly sorrow’ versus ‘Godly sorrow’ or Biblical repentance!” (Brett), then in this case we may not be able to pursue reconciliation or forgiveness from them.*
  - **Discuss:** Brett mentioned Difficult, Destructive and Dangerous relationships (including marriages). Using the quote above, discuss how we should respond if we find someone is in any one of those relational situations. Consider what part Christ-centered Community (like Life Groups) has to play in responding well to someone who finds themselves in one of these “D”-relational situations.

## Let’s Apply

Jesus has offered lavish compassion, mercy and grace to be received by the truly repentant person. And with that comes freedom and forgiveness and reconciliation.

- **Discuss:** How have you received, understood and felt that from God in your own life?
- **Discuss:** How do you offer that to people who have offended or abused or hurt or disagreed with or... you?
- **Discuss:** What are the dangers of receiving this from Jesus but not offering it to those who have offended or hurt you?

**Discuss:** Consider your willingness to Listen to God and your willingness to be forgiven by God. Now, consider your heart toward others: your willingness to listen to others and your willingness to forgive and be forgiven. Is there an equal willingness and attitude? Spend some time journaling or praying about that.



## Let’s Pray

This openness to living out of God’s lavish gift towards us despite our sin and stubbornness, AND our willingness to listen and forgive those around us, is a Life-long journey. Even if we have lived for many years as dedicated followers of Jesus, we continuously need to come back to embrace what Jesus did for us and assess how we are reflecting Him in our relationships with others as a response. Write out prayers to pray for each other. Pray them over each other.

*Holy Spirit, empower us with the love of the Father to join Jesus in his mission. Grow us as your body for your global mission. Through Christ we pray. Amen.*