

## Sunday School Lesson for the Month of September 2019

### The Practice of Forgiveness in Family Relations

(Luke 17:1-4)

**Sundays, September 1, 8, 2019**

All human beings are mistake makers. We are all imperfect creatures. We sin against God, ourselves, and others. Parents mistreat their children. Married partners mistreat each other. Children mistreat their parents. Children within the family mistreat each other. All members of the family circle stand in need of practicing the teachings of our Lord concerning forgiveness.

All human beings are mistreated. Each of us will experience injury and injustice at the hands of others. Some of us have been abused by our parents. Some of us have been terribly mistreated within the bond of marriage. Some parents have experienced painful and repetitive injury at the hands of their children. Some are in pain and agony because of the selfishness of a brother or sister.

How will you deal constructively with injury and mistreatment? What is your method of dealing with mistreatment at the hands of family members? If we are Christians, we are obligated not only to listen but also to heed the teachings of Jesus Christ at this point. Jesus suggests, recommends, and requires that we use a forgiving spirit and attitude in dealing with the injuries that are inflicted upon us by others.

- I. **Consider the possible methods you have for dealing with mistreatment.**
  - A. You can resort to retaliation. You can be vindictive, and you can seek to secure revenge. You can strike out and return evil for evil, blow for blow, contempt for contempt, and insult for insult.
  - B. You can suppress your hostility as a result of being mistreated by others. To suppress hostility is to let it smolder within you. Suppression will eventually create a volcanic explosion. It will contribute to an attitude of hate that will poison your whole system and create a cancer within your mind and emotions.
  - C. You can resort to a self-destructive retreat into self-pity. When we experience mistreatment at the hands of others, if we do not retaliate, if we do not suppress our hostility, we may resort to self-pity, and this can lead to discouragement, despair, and depression as black as midnight.

## Sundays, September 15, 22, 2019

### II. Consider Jesus' Method for dealing with mistreatment.

One of the final sayings of our Lord from the cross reveals His personal method of dealing with mistreatment at the hands of others: Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

- A. To forgive is to reject the right to retaliate, to strike back, or to return evil for evil. Joseph provides us a remarkable Old Testament example of a brother forgiving the injury he had experienced at the hands of his brothers (Gen. 50:15-21).
- B. To forgive is the deliberate decision on the part of the injured not to harbor hostility toward the one who inflicted the injury.
- C. To forgive is to deliberately decide to return good for evil, to restore a broken relationship, and reestablish a shattered fellowship.
- D. To forgive is to restore a warm relationship. To forgive is to relate to the other person in terms of what is highest and best for the one who has mistreated you.
- E. Forgiveness and forgetfulness are not one in the same. Forgiveness must be repeated over and over every time the injury is remembered (Matt. 18:22). By insisting to insure us against the self-destructive effects that are certain to come toward the person who refuses to practice forgiveness.

## Sunday, September 29, 2019

### III. The Practice of Forgiveness.

The practice of forgiveness toward others is based on our pre-forgiveness by our heavenly Father. Paul said, "and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:32). He repeated these words of encouragement to the saints at Colossae (Col. 3:12-13).

God's forgiveness of us is hindered if we do not forgive those who sin against us. To refuse to be forgiving means that our prayers will go unanswered (Matt. 6:13-14). When we refuse to be forgiving, we cooperate with the devil as he seeks to establish a place within our life from which he can work out his purpose in and through us (2 Cor. 2:10-11).

It is never easy to be forgiving toward those who have sinned against us. Somehow in the grace of God, if we will tarry in Gethsemane and recognize the tremendous price Jesus Christ paid that we might experience forgiveness, we will

find the help we need to be forgiving toward those who have been unkind and who have brought injury into our hearts and lives.

To be forgiving is not a price we pay for the privilege of being forgiven; it is a condition we must meet in order to receive forgiveness. Let us ask our Heavenly Father to give us the grace to be forgiving toward all who have sinned against us in order that we might experience the joy of His forgiveness.