



# Managing GOD's Money

## Theme for June: Walking the Walk

*During an intensive two-year period when I set out to prove Christianity was for "weak-minded losers," faith preoccupied me. I realized subconsciously I put faith in many objects and people daily. Still I thought, "Why would anyone become a follower of Jesus, accepting 'blindly,' assumptions about Him?" I learned He died, rose, is alive today. But did I have faith enough to believe? Later, with open eyes, I found out I didn't have faith enough to disbelieve Jesus is Messiah! This month as we look at how we practice our faith, we will review these faith-related topics:*



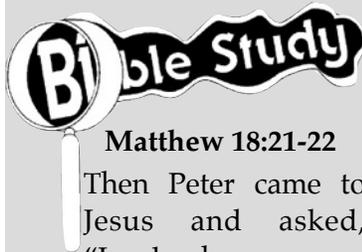
*June 1-7 - Faith and Hope*

*June 8-14 - Command and Assurances*

*June 15-21 - Forgiveness and Restoration*

*June 22-30 - Happiness is ...*

## Topic for June 15-21: Forgiveness and Restoration



**Matthew 18:21-22**

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?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

**M**any folks have difficulty understanding and accepting Jesus' forgiveness for their sins, so they can't forgive others even once, much less *seventy-seven times*.

How often do we hear a friend or coworker say, "I will never forgive him or her for this or that?" How often do we feel this way? In the flesh, we can't imagine forgiving those who betray us. Yet, Jesus' followers should forgive those who sin against us (**Luke 11:4**). After all, harboring un-forgiveness and resentment results in hidden resentment, hate, anger, negative emotions, and harms our health. Even so, a believer in Jesus who has difficulty forgiving, won't lose his or her salvation.

We sin when we withhold forgiveness after the Holy Spirit's prompting. This interrupts our communion with God. That's why we must deal with the

unforgiving spirit swiftly by first getting Jesus' forgiveness.

How do we get Jesus' forgive

ness? After the Holy Spirit's nudging, we need to accept our sin without "yeah-but" intervention — rationalizing why we did it. Next, we should repent and confess to our gracious Heavenly Father.

For many, it is easy to say, "I'm sorry," without regret. A sincere apology comes with regret, which is more than saying "I'm sorry." It's turning away from what I did. It is not merely changing my behavior, but a sincere wish that the person I offended forgives me.

God demands remorse that has visible results. In **Luke 3:8**, John the Baptist said, "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance."

Confession, on the other hand, is agreeing with God that I have sinned. I am ready to have God's forgiveness only after confession. Apostle John describes this concisely in **1 John 1:9**:

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Forgiveness is an essential lesson we must take from Jesus' death for us. Forgiveness is part of His unchanging nature. He gave His life voluntarily for us so He could pardon us for our sins. Recently someone told me it is impossible for him to forgive himself for his cruel actions. So, he said, he is sure Jesus will never forgive him.

Doesn't this attitude set this individual up as greater than God? The Holy Spirit will help us accept God's unconditional forgiveness that cleanses. Only then can we forgive others. In **Matthew 6:15** Jesus highlights the need to forgive others. He tells us if we do not forgive, He will



## Memory Verse

**2 Chronicles 7:14**

If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

not forgive us. Read and reflect on Matthew 6:15, ... if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

An unforgiving spirit is contrary to God's word; it is sinful. Besides, if we harbor un-forgiveness, we will not be in a state to confess our sins, much less repent.

In **Matthew 5:23-24**, Jesus mentions another side to forgiveness. If we know a brother or sister who is holding something against us, Jesus tells us in these verses to settle with him or her. The difference here is someone else is harboring un-forgiveness, and we know. Mull over Jesus' words:

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

Does the sin, repent, confess, forgive, cycle give the true follower of Jesus a license to sin? No, a genuine believer in Jesus has the Holy Spirit living in Him and seeks to do God's will. Even so, his or her sin nature causes him or her to rebel and sin (**Romans 7:15-25**); but not habitually.

It's essential we recognize we will sin and God will forgive us when we repent and confess. What's more, we need to understand that in our own strength we can't forgive.

In a tear-jerking description of how God allowed her to forgive one of the cruelest Nazi guards at Ravensbruck, Corrie Ten Boom wrote this:

"... I stood there with the coldness clutching my heart. But forgiveness is not an emotion— I knew that, too. Forgiveness is an act of the will, and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. "Jesus, help me!" I

prayed silently. "I can lift my hand. I can do that much. You supply the feeling."

He did, and she forgave him. A man who once committed vicious acts against her, her family, and many others, but who accepted Jesus' Lordship and got His forgiveness.

Like repentance, forgiveness must be genuine. But must we forget after we forgive? God forgets. The writer of Hebrews penned these words in Hebrews 10:17: "I will remember their sins and their iniquities no more."

In our humanness, we cannot forget, but the Holy Spirit's power can release us to trust those who offend us. Once I heard this forgiveness definition: Forgiveness is trusting someone in the area they failed. Think about this?

After God forgives us, he restores us and uses us like we never failed. He restored King David following his adultery with Bathsheba (**2 Samuel 11:2-4**) and his murder of Uriah (**2 Samuel 11:15**). To be sure, God called David "a man after His own heart" (**1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22**).

As well, Apostle Paul's zealous persecution of

Christians didn't prevent God from using him mightily after He believed in Messiah.

Being forgiven and restored doesn't remove sin's effects. Though Jesus saves the believer from sin's final effect, eternal damnation, each of us will experience some or all these outcomes: shame for what we did, fear somebody might catch us, regret we felt, pain, guilt, sickness, or other difficulties.

Shortly after believing in Jesus, I sensed a strong urge to contact folks I offended previously to seek their forgiveness. Remorse for some decisions and actions while on "the fast track to hell" filled me. I knew Jesus had forgiven me, but also I knew I needed to seek others' forgiveness.

The first person I visited shocked me. I told him about my new life and asked his forgiveness for offending him earlier. His reply was brief: "No way, will I forgive you!" Not prepared for such a reaction, it shattered me. I wept! Oh yes, here I was, a 38-year-old business executive who in this person's eyes was self-centered, arrogant, brash. I stood before him in tears, humbled and confused.

Angry, visibly moved, dumbstruck, my former colleague marched out the room. After sobbing for what seemed like months, but was only a couple minutes, I sensed the Lord telling me "it's over." My role was to repent sincerely and ask for forgiveness, nothing more.

As I heard "it was over," a burden lifted. Filled with God's peace, I left the room wondering what will happen to my former colleague. Almost 15 years later, I learned he committed his life to the Lord. Praise the Lord.

## Application



**1 Peter 1 : 15-21**

"... For you know that it was not with perishable things...that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. ... Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

I learned two critical lessons as I asked forgiveness from others I offended. First, never venture out without asking the Lord for direction and protection—this applies to all proposed actions. Second, when I have wronged someone I am not responsible for their reaction when I seek their forgiveness. Harboring a grudge and withholding forgiveness is harmful to your mental and physical health, contrary to God's wishes, and sinful. To forgive, we need sensitive spirits and a wish to depend on the Lord. He takes care of the rest.

If someone wronged you, took advantage of you, abused you, offended you, Messiah Jesus is the only permanent healing source.



Only He can restore you. Human counselors have a role; some can help you with physical and emotional healing, but they are no substitutes for comfort and healing that comes from

Jesus.

Meditate this week on the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), which shows a picture of a repentant son who after squandering his inheritance returns home to work for his father. He expected nothing. He would become a slave in his father's household, if needed. But his forgiving father restored him and offered Him everything. His father extended to him Jesus' love, mercy, and grace. His father was happy because he found his lost son.

This parable shows the Father's heart. Ask the Creator of the universe, the believer's perfect loving Heavenly Father, Jesus the Messiah, to heal you and give you the strength, grace, and mercy to forgive those who have offended you. Remember, Jesus knows how you feel.

If you have caused pain to others, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you seek that person's forgiveness. Most of all, ask the Lord to forgive you.

When you offer grace and forgiveness to your offender, he or she might see Messiah in you and surrender his or her life to Him. A similar result might happen when humbly you repent, confess,

and ask someone whom you have hurt to forgive you.

Grace, mercy, and peace be with you in our Messiah's Name.



Considering this month's theme, *Walking the Walk*, this period's topic, *Forgiveness and Restoration*, daily, reflect on the specific verses in the *Daily Reflection* section below. These questions might help:

1. Who is talking to whom, about what, and in what context?
2. How do these verses apply to me today?
3. What lessons from these verses can I start to do today?

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# Daily Reflections

**June 15:**  
Matthew 18:21-35;  
Luke 15:11-32

**June 16:**  
Luke 11:4; Matthew  
5:23-24

**June 17:**  
Matthew 6:15; Luke  
3:8

**June 18:**  
Romans 7:15-25

**June 19:**  
1 Samuel  
13:14, Acts 13:22

**June 20:**  
2 Samuel 11:1-17

**June 21:**  
1 John 1:5-10