



## LESSON 14: Too little, too late Esther 7:8-10

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Read Nehemiah 9:16-21. How does this passage highlight God's mercy and forgiveness?

What attribute of God's people does it also highlight?

Read 1 John 1:8-10. What must we do for Him to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness?

Read Matthew 6:9-15. Who are we to seek forgiveness from?

Why are we to forgive?

What heart issue (fear, trust, selfishness, etc.) does this address?

Read Matthew 18:15-20. Who are we to approach in seeking repentance and reconciliation?

Is this a blanket method for dealing with everyone who sins against you?

Why not? (That is, why is this not the manner in which we are to handle forgiveness of those who are not believers?)

Read Matthew 18:21-22. Is there a limit to how many times we are to forgive others?

Read verses 23-35. In this parable, which warns us to forgive as we have been forgiven, who is the master?

Who would the first servant be, in light of the lesson being taught?

Who would the second servant be?

What will be the punishment given to the first servant (remember who that is representing)?

How should that knowledge impact you when someone sins against you?

Read Ephesians 1:3-7. Our forgiveness comes through what? How does Paul describe this "kind" of grace here?

What does that tell you about how much you have been forgiven?

Read Colossians 3:12-14. What are we, as Christ's body, to do when we have a complaint against another?

Read Luke 6:27-31. How are we to treat our enemies?

What are we to do to those who hate us?

What are we to do to those who curse us?

What are we to do to those who abuse us?

What about those who strike us?

Are these things that we can force ourselves to do?

Why or why not?

As Christians, forgiveness is necessary both "vertically" and "horizontally." That is, we must be forgiven of our sins by God through Christ's sacrifice (vertically) and we must forgive others because we have been forgiven of our sins (horizontally).

One thing to address here: forgiveness is a command, but reconciliation is not. Reconciliation is something that requires both parties to repent and show the change that repentance brings in order to heal that relationship. Forgiveness does not mean pretending everything is okay when it isn't. Forgiveness also doesn't mean staying in any type of an abusive relationship. We are called to forgive our abusers; to pray for them and to bless them, but we are not called to be in continued relationship with them when there is no repentance.

As you spend time with God today, consider how much you have been forgiven of. Do you see the lavish grace that has been poured out for you? Praise your Father for that gift today. Is there someone you are withholding forgiveness from, either because you mistook forgiveness for reconciliation or because you want that other person to suffer? Bring that to God today. Ask Him to help you to release that debt owed to you and give it to Him. Ask Him for wisdom in your relationships, to know when to reconcile and when it isn't safe to reconcile. Remember, you aren't supposed to do this on your own. You aren't supposed to be "that amazing person" who can forgive all those who have hurt you. Christ working in your life helps you to forgive, to let go of those debts. As you consider who you need to forgive today, realized that you aren't doing this alone or on your own strength and rest in Him as you seek His word and wisdom to know how to forgive as He has called you to.