

Chapter 2

Levels of Forgiveness

In the parable, the master had compassion on this man who owed him one hundred thousand dollars. The master released him. What kind of man was that master? Why was he able to forgive such a large amount of debt? Could it be merely because he was rich? I don't think so because I know a lot of rich people who are very stingy.

I believe strongly that this master had some experience in showing compassion. I don't think anyone starts off by forgiving such large sums of money. He must have practiced forgiving smaller debts. He might have started with forgiving ten dollars. Then he might have moved up to one hundred, one thousand and then to one hundred thousand dollars.

This master understood the power of forgiveness. We all need to be like him. We may not be able to forgive large debts in the beginning. But we can start with small debts. We can start by forgiving others who just rub us the wrong way.

We learned from the Bible that faith grows. There are different levels of faith. JESUS referred to the following three levels at different times, "no-faith, little faith and great-faith." In the same way, there are growing levels of forgiveness. We must first begin at the ten dollar level. With

practice, we will increase in our ability to forgive people for more serious situations. We can grow to the ten thousand dollar and higher levels.

We should also realize that as we grow in God, Satan will give us higher resistance. When Satan noticed that Paul was becoming greatly used by God, Satan assigned a demon to trouble Paul on a regular basis. Those troubles came mostly through people. We should not focus on the people being used by Satan. We should turn our guns toward Satan. Those people are not our real enemies. Our real enemy is Satan himself who is trying to stop God's power from flowing through us. We should remember what the Bible says in Ephesians 6:12.

*For we wrestle not against flesh and **blood**, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).*

We may notice that we are getting offended in more situations. But we should not grow weary in well doing. We need to understand that forgiveness doesn't just release the person we are forgiving. Forgiveness releases us also. This type of teaching about the power of forgiveness is not for the weak-minded Christian. It is for those who want to grow into the deeper things of God. It takes a mature Christian to forgive. It takes someone who wants to be like JESUS to say '*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*' (Luke 23:34).

We need to realize that most of the time, people who are doing us wrong do not know what they are doing. I am not trying to absolve people from their responsibility. Satan uses people who show themselves to be used. But many times, they may not be aware of the fact that they are being used by the devil. It could be a family member in your household or someone in the church. It could be someone at your place of work. It could even be someone you do not know. While you are on your way to work, someone could cut you off in traffic.

When we go back to the parable, we will notice in verses 32 and 33 that the master instructed the servant to follow in his footsteps. Being forgiven of our sins, JESUS expects us be imitators of Him. He expects us to forgive sinners their sins. CHRIST is the Head of the church. We are His body. The body must follow whatever the Head does. JESUS is the Vine and we are the branches. We must produce the fruit of the vine.