

Jesus Calls Us to Forgive

(based on Matthew 18:21–35)

Peter asked Jesus, “How many times should I forgive someone?” Peter wanted to know if he should forgive someone seven times. Jesus replied, “Not just seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

I wonder, “Why might Jesus call us to forgive so many times?”

Jesus told Peter a story to help him think about the answer to his question:

Once a servant owed a king some money.

It wasn’t a small amount of money (*hold hands slightly apart*).

It wasn’t a medium amount of money (*move hands farther apart*).

It was an ENORMOUS sum of money (*hold your arms out as wide as you can*).

The king asked the servant to give back all the money he owed, but the servant had no money.

The man fell to his knees. “Please, sir!” he begged the king. “Give me a few days. I’ll pay everything back, I promise.”

The king felt sorry for the man. He knew the servant couldn’t pay back the enormous sum of money, so he let him go free.

“You don’t owe me anything,” he told the servant.

I wonder, “How did the servant feel?”

As the servant was leaving the palace, he saw a man who owed him some money.

It wasn’t an enormous sum of money (*hold your arms out as wide as you can*).

It wasn’t a medium amount of money (*move hands closer*).

It was a tiny amount of money (*hold your thumb and forefinger slightly apart*).

The servant marched over to the man. “You owe me some money!” he yelled. “Pay up now!”

The man fell to his knees. “Please, sir!” he begged. “Give me a few days. I’ll pay everything back, I promise.”

But the first servant refused to listen. Instead, he sent the man to jail.

When the other servants in the palace heard about the man being thrown into jail, they were very upset. They told the king what had happened. The king was furious. He called the first servant back in to see him.

“You owed me an enormous amount of money (*hold your arms out as wide as you can*),” the king exclaimed. “When you begged for more time, I felt sorry for you. I even said you did not have to pay back a single penny. Don’t you think you should show the same kindness to your fellow servant, who owed you only a tiny amount of money?”

Then the king had the first servant thrown into jail until he could pay back what he owed.

