

A note from Kathy

Childlike faith in our God is a wonderful thing; it trusts completely from a humble heart. Jesus said we must have a faith like this if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven. James 4:10 says, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." What will this look like in your life today?

Observation

1. The disciples were no different than we are today. When we ponder where we rank in any group of individuals, we can know that this is our human nature at work. We are leaving the door open for pride and jealousy to creep in. What question do we see the disciples asked Jesus in verse 1?
2. Jesus called a little child to help him illustrate the truth he wanted them to see. What qualities does a child have that are required of a follower? It might help to go back and check the Beatitudes of Matthew 5 in order to answer this question.
3. In verse 7 Jesus said, "Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin." What kind of things do you believe he was referring to here? Read Matthew 16:6.
4. Jesus continued teaching that it was better to be physically limited by the loss of a limb or an eye than to allow sin to reign. It was better to be maimed and crippled than to be cast _____. What is God's intended purpose for our body parts?

Romans 6:12-13 says, Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.

5. Jesus told a parable of a lost sheep. Parables are a representation of something real in life or nature, from which a moral is drawn for instruction (an earthly story with a heavenly meaning). If you enjoy drawing things out, this could be a fun assignment. If you do not enjoy things like that, make a list of the events of this parable. Then write out the truth that Jesus is illustrating.

6. Matthew 18:15-20 gives us very clear direction as to how to handle it when a fellow believer sins against us.

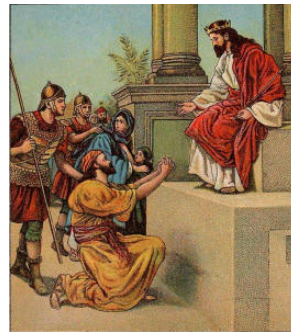
- a. The first thing you are to do is _____.
- b. If he or she will not listen, _____.
- c. If they still refuse to listen, _____.
- d. If they continue to refuse, _____.

7. Peter asked Jesus a question that all of us struggle with from time to time. Write out his question. Peter probably thought he was being rather generous with the idea of seven times. What did Jesus tell him?

8. Jesus told another parable, the parable of the unmerciful servant. What is the comparison?

_____ is like

_____.



9. On a separate piece of paper jot down the details from verses 23-35.
(10,000 talents = about 20 years wages) (100 denari = about 3 months wages)

Application

1. Jesus said that we must become as a little child if we are to enter the kingdom of heaven. Little children have no accomplishments to trust in or wealth to rely on. They have little to no strength or cunning to handle matters on their own. Because of their lack, they humbly accept help. What area of childlikeness do you struggle with the most?
2. Matthew 18:5 says, "whoever welcomes one of these in my name welcomes me." Who are the people you are welcoming?
Are you tenderly leading them, helping them grow in the knowledge of God?
We are instructed to care for one another in the body of Christ. Write out Phil. 2:4.

3. In verse 6 Jesus warned that causing one of these innocent ones to sin is extremely dangerous. How might someone cause them to sin?
Why are they so vulnerable?
We must not take lightly the responsibility to protect and train those young in age or spiritual maturity. Read Titus 2:1-5; what are we instructed to do?
4. What are some stumbling blocks you struggle with; what trips you up?
Often like dominos in a line, there will be others who suffer and fall because they are watching us. What are you willing to part with in order to lead others into the kingdom of God?
5. Jesus told a beautiful parable about the never-ending love of God for us. The shepherd went to great lengths for this wandering sheep. Think back, to what lengths did the Lord go to find you?
I hear people say they searched and searched and finally found God, but is that the case? Who pursues who? Who longs to rescue us?

2 Peter 3:9 *The Lord is not slow to do what he has promised, as some think. Instead, he is patient with you because he does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants all to turn away from their sins.* GNT

Deuteronomy 7:7-8 *The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. 8 But it was because the LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to your forefathers that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.*

Psalms 103:1-3 *Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. 2 Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits-- 3 who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,*

Romans 5:6-9 *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!*

6. **Romans 12:18** *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.* This verse makes it perfectly clear how we are to strive to live, but there are times when brothers and sisters will hurt one another. Our good shepherd wants us to know ahead of the hurt how we are to handle matters. Going to the person with the right heart attitude, one that genuinely desires that we be restored, will often be all it takes to restore the relationship. Pray and trust God to go ahead of you. I know we do not like to think about this quality in our own heart, but what would keep us from obeying this command?
7. The last parable in this chapter is a powerful message on forgiveness. Make a list of things God has forgiven you for. Try really hard to write them all down. If it is something you do not want written down, simply write it in such a way that only you will know what it stands for. When you finish (this may take awhile), look back over it. How happy are you that all of it has been forgiven. **Isaiah 43:25** *"I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins."*
8. Jesus told Peter to forgive a brother's offense 490 times. What does doing something 490 times do for you?
Forgiveness is first a choice; it is a matter of the heart. My flesh and my will must line up with the choice of my spirit to obey my Lord. Forgiving someone out of obedience to the Lord allows us to go on with our lives whether or not they are ever sorry about the situation. We must ask ourselves, what part do their actions or lack of action play in my obedience? Who are we doing this for?
9. Forgiveness is often the hardest thing we have to do. Does forgiveness mean forgetting?
10. How are we to handle the memories of wrongs that have been inflicted on us?

Isaiah 43:18-19 *"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. 19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland."*

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 *Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

Matthew 6:14 *For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*

11. In our study we have seen, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.”

Matthew 5:7, and “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

Matthew 6:12

These verses always make me stop and ask myself, is this who I want to be? Is this how I want the Lord to forgive me?

12. Now let’s look at a few more verses on forgiveness. Jot down some notes on each.

a. Ephesians 4:32 *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

b. Mark 11:25 *And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins. "*

c. Colossians 3:13 *Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

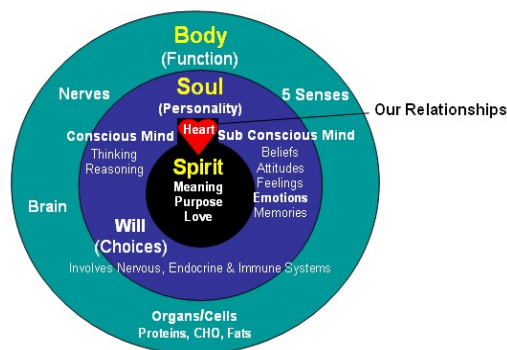
d. Luke 6:37 *"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.*

13. After just this simple study on forgiveness, what do you believe the Lord’s will is concerning forgiveness? What is his will for you today?

14. What proof do we have of the value God places on forgiveness?

15. What part does forgiveness play in the success of our walk of faith?

We Are a 3-Part Whole



We are spirit, have a soul and live in a body

We are never more like Christ than when we are forgiving someone.

16. What situation came to your mind as you were studying these verses on forgiveness?

17. Is the Holy Spirit of God prompting you to do anything?