GENESIS TO REVELATION | PARABLE

A Servant Learns about Forgiveness

Matthew 18:21-35



YOUR BIBLE READING

Receiving mercy calls us to show mercy to others.

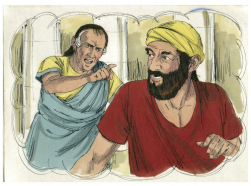
Inside: two extended reading pages, a thoughtful reflection, creative activities and a grown-up guide.

AGES 6-10 WITH AN ADULT • 6 COLORFUL A4 PAGES • ENGLISH ONLY

EXTENDED ENGLISH READING • PAGE 1 OF 2

A Debt the Servant Could Not Pay

Matthew 18:21-35



Peter asked Jesus how often he should forgive someone who wronged him. Would seven times be enough? Jesus answered with a number far beyond that suggestion and then told a parable about a king settling accounts with his servants. His answer was not an invitation to keep a notebook until the last permitted forgiveness was used. The story would show why receiving mercy should change the way someone treats another person.

One servant owed the king ten thousand talents, an enormous debt far beyond what he could repay. The size of the amount matters more than converting it into a modern price. This was not a small sum he had simply forgotten in his pocket. He could not meet the obligation. The king ordered that he, his family, and what he owned be sold toward paying the debt.

The servant fell before the king and begged for patience, promising to repay everything. The king was moved with compassion. Instead of only delaying payment, he released the servant and canceled the debt. The servant received more than the time he had requested: he was freed from the amount he owed. Jesus made the scale of the king's mercy clear before showing what happened outside that meeting.

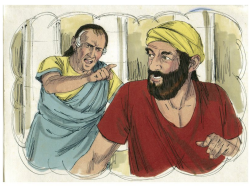
The forgiven servant then found a fellow servant who owed him a hundred denarii. That was still a real debt, but it was much smaller than the one just canceled. The first servant grabbed him and demanded payment. The contrast was immediate. The person who had needed compassion in the king's presence now had a chance to show compassion when someone else stood before him in need.

Remember: I can let the mercy I receive shape the mercy I give.

EXTENDED ENGLISH READING • PAGE 2 OF 2

The Mercy He Would Not Share

Matthew 18:21-35



The fellow servant fell down and begged for patience, promising that he would repay. His request echoed the appeal the first servant had made to the king. But the first servant refused. He had the man put in prison until the debt could be paid. The mercy he had received had not shaped his response. He insisted on his claim while ignoring the smaller debtor's plea for time.

Other servants saw what happened and were deeply distressed. They reported the matter to the king. The king called the first servant back and reminded him that his enormous debt had been forgiven because he had begged for mercy. Should he not have shown the same compassion to his fellow servant? The king's question connected the two meetings and exposed the difference between receiving kindness and being willing to pass it on.

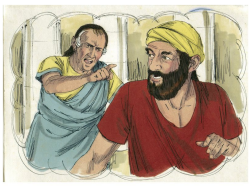
The king was angry and handed the servant over for severe punishment until the debt should be paid. Jesus ended with a serious warning about forgiving from the heart. This is a difficult ending, and it should not be turned into a game of frightening children. The parable uses a sharp contrast to teach that mercy is meant to reach into a person's actions, not remain a benefit kept only for oneself.

Forgiving does not mean that harm is harmless or that accountability must disappear. The fellow servants did not ignore the cruel behavior; they told the king what had happened. The story takes wrongdoing seriously while challenging a refusal to show mercy. Readers are invited to let God's compassion change their treatment of others, instead of demanding gentleness for themselves and then using power harshly when someone else needs help.

Pause and think: What might a merciful response look like when it also needs to protect someone and put a wrong right?

THINK, NOTICE & GROW

Mercy with Honesty and Safe Boundaries



Think about the difference between wanting another chance and offering one. If you hope someone will be patient while you learn, you can remember that hope when a friend makes an ordinary mistake. Mercy may mean listening, allowing a repair, or deciding not to keep teasing someone about what happened. It does not require pretending that you never felt hurt.

The other servants spoke up when they saw cruel treatment. Telling a trusted adult about harm is not the opposite of forgiveness. If someone keeps hurting or frightening you, safe boundaries and adult help are needed. You are never required to return to an unsafe situation, keep abuse secret, or accept pressure to forgive on someone else's timetable.

Jesus' question began with counting, but his story concerned the heart and the use of power. You can ask what your next action will do: make the hurt grow, or help a fair repair become possible? An adult can help you sort out a difficult case. Mercy is learned through patient practice, honest words, and care for everyone's safety.

A SMALL STEP FOR TODAY

Mercy received is meant to shape the mercy we show, alongside honesty and accountability.

What might a merciful response look like when it also needs to protect someone and put a wrong right?

Read, Remember & Create

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Think about the reading

1. What did the king do when the first servant begged?

2. What should the servant have shown his fellow servant?

2 Put the ideas in order

Write 1, 2 and 3 for the order these ideas appear in the reading.

- ☐ The king called him back and held him accountable.
- ☐ The servant refused mercy to a fellow servant.
- ☐ The king canceled the servant’s enormous debt.

3 Draw a meaningful picture

Draw one person receiving kindness and then sharing kindness with another.

Tell someone how your picture connects to the reading.

Read & Grow Together

Read and learn with context

This English edition is designed for ages 6-10 with an adult. Read both extended readings together, or enjoy one each day. Pause at unfamiliar words, invite questions and use the reflection page to connect the story with everyday life. These are retellings and lessons with explanations; read the listed Bible passage for context. Poetry, parables, letters and symbolic visions are identified by type.

Remember this

I can let the mercy I receive shape the mercy I give.
Original memory thought, not a direct Bible quotation. Related passage: Matthew 18:32-35

A thoughtful conversation

The full parable includes coercion and severe punishment, which this retelling treats gently. Forgiveness does not remove boundaries, require paying another person's debts, or mean keeping abuse secret.

Activity answers

1. He canceled the servant's enormous debt.
2. The compassion and mercy he had received.
Sequence boxes, top to bottom: 3, 2, 1. Personal responses and drawings will vary.

Optional prayer

God, help us receive your mercy and grow in forgiveness. Amen.

Print and share

Each pack has 6 pages. Print on A4 at Actual Size (100%). The worksheet is page 5. You may print just that page, or use the separate 150-page activity book. The collection contains 150 packs in Bible book order, 15 volumes and one ZIP. Catalog pack IDs stay the same when new readings are added.

Sources and sharing

English retellings, lessons, reflections and activities by DigiPick (2026), based on Matthew 18:21-35. Source checked with the public-domain World English Bible. Illustration © Sweet Publishing; 40_Mt_18_03_RG.jpg. CC BY-SA 3.0. Source: unfoldingWord. Resized proportionally, without cropping.
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