

Matthew 18:15 – 35*New American Standard Version*

¹⁵ “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen *to you*, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ “Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.” ²¹ Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” ²² Jesus *said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. ²³ “For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴ When he had begun to settle *them*, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. ²⁵ But since he did not have *the means* to repay, his lord commanded him to be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell *to the ground* and prostrated himself before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.’ ²⁷ And the lord of that slave felt compassion and released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and *began* to choke *him*, saying, ‘Pay back what you owe.’ ²⁹ So his fellow slave fell *to the ground* and *began* to plead with him, saying, ‘Have patience with me and I will repay you.’ ³⁰ But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed. ³¹ So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their lord all that had happened. ³² Then summoning him, his lord *said to him, ‘You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him. ³⁵ My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”

...the forgiveness of sins...**Observation (What does it say?):***What do you notice in this passage?*

- Repeated words or ideas?
- Comparisons or contrasts?
- Purpose or explanation?
- Unusual or symbolic language?
- Commands or instructions?
- Conditional (if–then) statements?
- Other observations?

Interpretation (What does it mean?):*After observing the passage:*

- What parts seem clear and straightforward?
- What parts seem unclear or confusing?
- What parts challenge your previous thinking?
- What questions come to mind as you read?
- How would you title this passage?

Application (What does it mean for me?):

- What parts of this passage fit your current life situation?
- What parts seem unrelated to your circumstances?
- How might this passage affect your understanding of who God is and what He is doing?
- What part of this passage would be the most challenging for you to apply?
- What would be different (attitudes, behavior) if God used this passage to change you?

Additional questions for thought and discussion:

Inductive Bible Study

(A few general ideas)

Observation
(What does it say?)

*What facts do you **observe** about the passage that help bring out the writer’s thought process?*

- Who are the people involved?
- What action takes place?
- What type of literature is it (poetry, history, didactic, etc.)?
- What details are included or left out?
- Are any unusual words used?
- Is there symbolic language?
- What is the grammar of the passage (pronouns, prepositions, verb tenses)?
- Are words or ideas repeated?
- Any comparisons or contrasts?
- Any cause and effect?
- Are there indications of purpose (“in order that...”)?
- Are there conclusions (“Therefore...”)?
- Are there explanations?
- Does the passage logically break into sections?
- How would you summarize the passage?
- What would be a good “headline” for the passage?

Interpretation
(What does it mean?)

*What questions come to mind about the facts that would help you **interpret** the meaning?*

- How would the original readers have understood the passage?
- What is the main emphasis?
- Why does the writer use repetition, or contrast, or unusual words?
- What does the grammar or structure of the passage reveal about the writer’s thought pattern?
- Is there a logical sequence in the passage?
- How are different ideas in the passage connected?
- Are there any new ideas or concepts presented?
- Are there difficulties in the passage?

Application
(What does it mean for me?)

*What is the impact on your life? What **application** does the Holy Spirit want to show you?*

- Is there a command to obey?
- Is there a promise to be thankful for?
- Is there an attribute of God to worship?
- Is there an example to follow?

**Read nothing into the Scriptures, but draw everything from them, and suffer nothing to remain hidden that is really in them.
J.A. Bengel (1687-1752)**