

Faith, Forgiveness and Family

Chapter 16

Audio lesson: New Testament 16



Objective: To explain more of Jesus' teaching in the book of Matthew.



"I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."

—Matthew 17:20

"I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. . . . And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me."

—Matthew 18:3, 5

Jesus taught His disciples many things in the great discourses, the parables, and His conversations in the Gospel of Matthew. One of His repeated teachings was on the importance of faith. On one occasion, His disciples could not cast an evil spirit out of a boy, and Jesus told them they had little faith. When the boy's father asked for greater faith, Jesus said that all things are possible to those who believe.

Jesus also taught frequently about forgiveness. In the Sermon on the Mount, He told His disciples to pray that God would forgive them as they forgave others and said that His followers must show that they understand mercy by being merciful. Since we have been forgiven, we are to forgive constantly. Later in Matthew, He tells a parable of a man who was forgiven for an enormous debt, but who then insisted that small debtors pay him for every penny they owed. This kind of person does not understand forgiveness, Jesus said, and will not experience His forgiveness.

Then Jesus taught about marriage and divorce, emphasizing that marriage is a sacred covenant that should not be dissolved except when one partner has broken the covenant by living in adultery. Responsibilities in marriage and in raising children should always be taken very seriously.



1. True or false? The Bible never says anything about guardian angels.
2. True or false? None of us has perfect faith, but it is possible for our faith to increase.
3. True or false? It is good for us to agree when others pray because unity is an important part of being Christians.
4. True or false? When someone sins against us repeatedly, we should forgive them up to seven times.

Unless otherwise noted, choose one best answer for each question.

5. What did Jesus teach about having faith?
 - a. It is not the size of our faith that is important, but Who our faith is in
 - b. We need to learn to trust God in all areas of our life
 - c. We cannot be unbelieving and say we have faith
 - d. All of the above
6. How much does God forgive us when we become a Christian?
 - a. Just a little, since most of us are good people when we come to Him
 - b. Enough that we only have to pay for a few of our minor sins
 - c. For however much financial debt we owe other people
 - d. For everything—the huge debt our sins have created.
7. What does Jesus say about those who are not willing to forgive others?
 - a. They are wise not to let people get away with offenses.
 - b. He will let them become judges in His kingdom.
 - c. They will not experience His forgiveness because they have not understood His mercy.
 - d. He will require them to pay a fine and serve time in prison.

8. Which of the following is an essential statement in any relationship?
 - a. "I am wrong. I am sorry. Will you forgive me?"
 - b. "Why do you not apologize to me when you are wrong?"
 - c. "I would apologize if I were wrong, but I usually am not."
 - d. "I am always wrong. It is always my fault. How do you put up with me?"

9. What did Jesus teach about marriage?
 - a. It is a sacred, permanent covenant.
 - b. It can be dissolved only at the husband's request.
 - c. Divorce was forbidden in the Law of Moses, but times have changed, so God allows it today.
 - d. It does not matter how often someone gets married as long as he or she is married to only one person at a time.

10. How does someone become an adequate parent?
 - a. Simply by getting married and bearing children
 - b. Only by becoming an adequate person by God's help
 - c. By reading the Bible a lot
 - d. By letting the children do whatever they want to do

11. What did Jesus tell the rich young ruler to do to have eternal life?
 - a. Keep the commandments to earn God's favor.
 - b. Voluntary poverty is the only way to salvation.
 - c. Repent for loving his riches more than he loved God.
 - d. It is impossible for the rich to enter heaven.

12. What must we do to have eternal life?
 - a. Keep all the commandments to earn God's favor
 - b. Voluntarily give up wealth and become poor
 - c. Repent from anything we love more than we love God
 - d. Say a special prayer and get baptized



The rich young ruler had to repent for making his money a higher priority than God. What did repentance mean for you? How often do you need to make sure God is your highest priority? God has forgiven you of all your sins if you have trusted in Him as your Lord and Savior. Is there someone now whom you need to forgive?



Thank God for His great mercy and His willingness to forgive. Thank Him also for the gifts He has given you (forgiveness, health, family, marriage, eternal life, and fellowship with other believers). Ask him to strengthen your family relationships today so your family will be a picture of God's love.



Going Deeper

1. In a survey, we do not have time to apply all the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels. In general, how are we to apply the three dimensions in which Jesus taught forgiveness in the Gospel of Matthew: when we look up; when we look around; and when we look in? _____

2. When Peter asked Jesus if he should forgive those who trespassed against him up to seven times, Jesus taught a great parable (Matthew 18: 21-35). How are we to apply the essential teaching of that parable in our relationships with those who have trespassed against us? _____

3. Considering that same passage, how are we to apply the teaching of Jesus that we are to forgive seventy times seven? _____

4. How are we to apply the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 19 that marriage is one man and one woman together forever? _____

5. To make this work, Jesus taught in that same passage that this is only possible when God helps us. How do we become an adequate person, partner, and parent to make marriage and family work and last forever? (Consider Psalm 127: 1, 2; Matthew 19: 11, 12; John 3: 3, 5)

6. When the man whose son the disciples of Jesus could not heal said with tears, "Lord I believe, help my unbelief," the Lord responded favorably. How can you and I raise the threshold of our belief and lower the threshold of our unbelief?

7. Compare and contrast the story of the rich young ruler with the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19. What did they have in common, and how were they different? What does this tell you about repentance? _____
