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A Heart of Stone

Key References: Matthew 18:21-35; *Christ's Object Lessons,* chap. 19, pp. 243-251; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 8, pp. 128-130; 91-93; Our Beliefs, nos. 7, 8, 10.



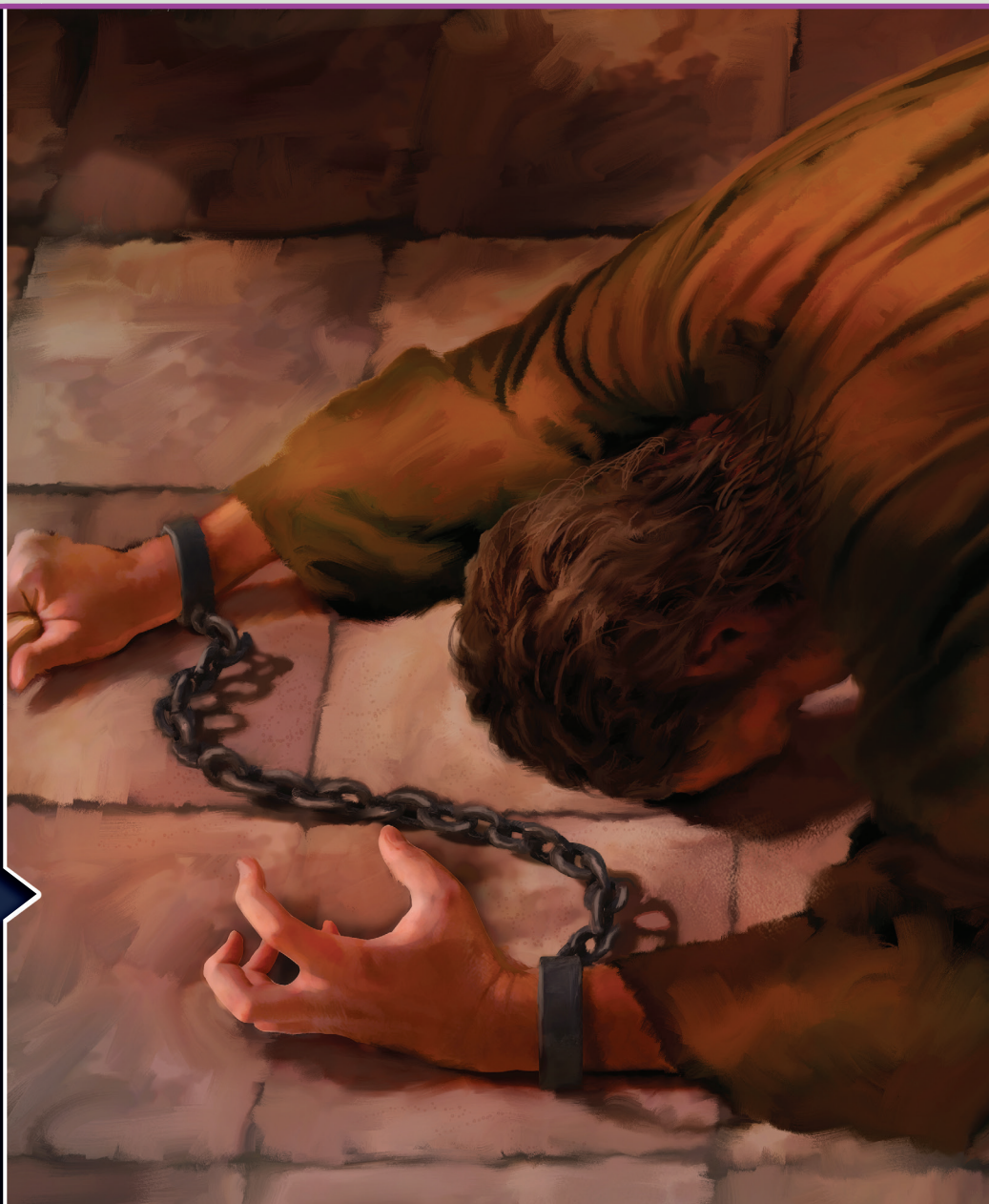












Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 61.

power**text**

"For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You" (Psalm 86:5).

power**point**



God's forgiveness has no limits.

Have you ever wondered what forgiveness means and how much you need to forgive? The disciples wondered about such things too, so Jesus answered their question by telling them a parable.

A rich and powerful king began to collect on the debts that were owed to him by other people. In the process he discovered that one of his servants owed him 10,000 talents of gold. That was more money than the servant could earn in his entire lifetime. There was no way this servant could ever pay back what he owed. The servant was brought before the king and was told that until the debt was paid back, he along with his children and his wife would be thrown in jail. The man fell down and begged the king, saying, "Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all" (Matthew 18:26). Of course, this wasn't even possible for the man to do, so the king decided to do something wonderful! He forgave the servant and let him go free!

If you were the servant, wouldn't you want to live the rest of your life in grateful service to the one who treated you with such undeserved kindness? Well, you would think so, but unfortunately the servant hadn't learned the value of forgiveness. As soon as he left the king's court, he remembered that one of his coworkers owed him a few dollars. Filled with anger, the servant approached his coworker in a fury, demanding that he should pay what he owed. The coworker fell to his knees begging for mercy and asked for time to repay his

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Sunday

READ Read Matthew 18:21, 22 and this week's story, "A Heart of Stone."

REVIEW Review the power text, Psalm 86:5.

PRAY Thank God that He is always ready to forgive you.

Monday

READ Read Matthew 18:23-27.

CALCULATE Multiply 70 x 7. How often would you have to forgive someone using this formula?

CHART Record in your Bible study journal the times you ask forgiveness (of God, your family, your friends).

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God that His forgiveness is without limits.

Tuesday

READ Review Matthew 18:28-30.

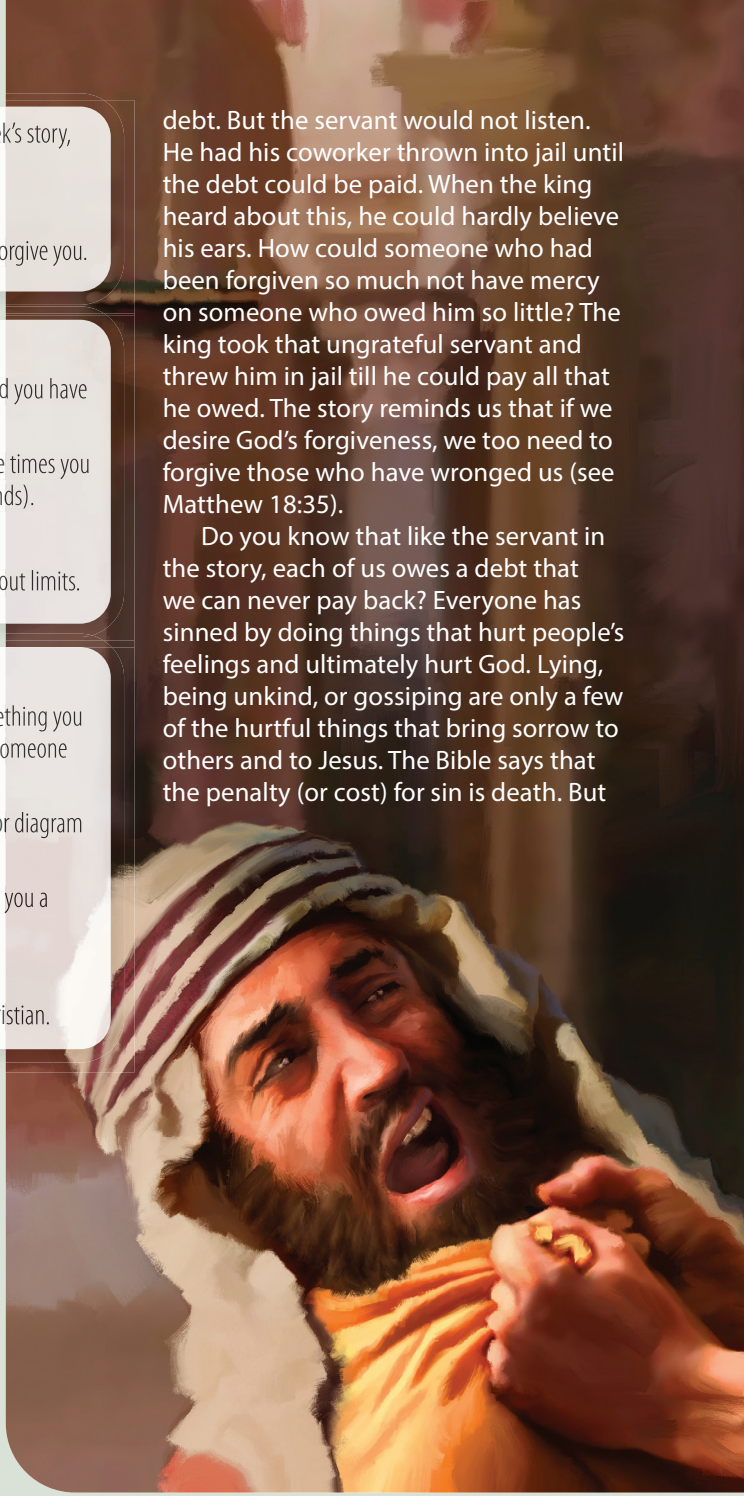
THINK Have you ever been forgiven for something you couldn't repay or fix? Have you ever forgiven someone else for something like that?

CREATE Use art supplies to create a symbol or diagram expressing what forgiveness looks like to you.

ASK Ask your parents or grandparents to tell you a forgiveness story from their lives.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you be a forgiving Christian.



debt. But the servant would not listen. He had his coworker thrown into jail until the debt could be paid. When the king heard about this, he could hardly believe his ears. How could someone who had been forgiven so much not have mercy on someone who owed him so little? The king took that ungrateful servant and threw him in jail till he could pay all that he owed. The story reminds us that if we desire God's forgiveness, we too need to forgive those who have wronged us (see Matthew 18:35).

Do you know that like the servant in the story, each of us owes a debt that we can never pay back? Everyone has sinned by doing things that hurt people's feelings and ultimately hurt God. Lying, being unkind, or gossiping are only a few of the hurtful things that bring sorrow to others and to Jesus. The Bible says that the penalty (or cost) for sin is death. But

Jesus came to pay the debt of your sins and mine. By dying on the cross, he paid our debt in full. Now we can enjoy the free gift of salvation that God offers to us. We can live with Jesus forever.

But how can we forgive someone who has really wronged us? Yes, it's true that we are human, and sometimes things may seem hard for us to do. However, God promises to give us the tender heart we need to really forgive others. When we realize what Jesus has done for us, we will be so thankful for the eternal life He offers us that we will find it much easier to forgive others.

Peter, one of the disciples, asked Jesus how many times we should forgive someone. Peter thought that seven times would be more than enough. But Jesus said to him, "Not seven times but seventy times seven" (see Matthew 18:21, 22).

The answer to that math problem is a big number. The point is that we



Wednesday

READ Read Matthew 18:31-35.

CHART Keep charting how you experience forgiveness.

THINK When have you acted like the unforgiving servant? What could you have done differently?

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for His forgiveness. Ask Him for a forgiving spirit toward others.

Thursday

READ Read Psalm 103:9-12.

THINK Which of the characters in this story is most like you? In what ways?

EXPLAIN What does it mean to forgive from your heart? Write your answer in your Bible study journal.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to enable you to forgive from your heart.

Friday

READ Read Ezekiel 33:16 and Micah 7:19.

THINK Think of someone you need to forgive.

CHART How do your numbers add up? Do you think Jesus meant we are supposed to count how many times we forgive a person? Why or why not?

CONNECT As a family, ask for and offer forgiveness to each other. Think of a way to apply Micah 7:19 together.

REPEAT Say the power text, Psalm 86:5, by memory.

PRAY Thank God that He wipes clean the memory of our sins.

would lose count of forgiving someone that many times. So what should we do? The Bible tells us that no matter how many times we have forgiven someone, we should go to that person and talk to them kindly about the problem. Sometimes we might need to ask them to forgive us too.

True freedom comes from accepting God's forgiveness and sharing that forgiveness with others. Today you may accept the challenge to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).





"HELP US TO FORGIVE, LORD"

Consider this verse:

"And forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us" (Luke 11:4).

Can you fit all the words of this verse into the grid below? If a word appears in the verse more than once, it appears in the puzzle only once. (Hint: fit the longest words in first, using the number of letters in each word as a help.)

