

GOD FORGIVES THE DEBT THAT WE CANNOT PAY

FOUNDATION: GOD IS GRACIOUS - GOD GIVES FORGIVENESS

BIG TRUTH: GOD FORGIVES THE DEBT THAT WE CANNOT PAY

Isaiah 43:25; Romans 5:10; 6:17-18, 23; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Ephesians 2:13-19; Colossians 2:13-14

BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 1:7A

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses."

BIG IDEAS

- God is forgiving.
- Someone must pay the debt that we owe.
- God offers forgiveness through Jesus, who pays our debt.
- The debt that we owe to God is impossible for us to pay.

BIBLE STORY: MATTHEW 18:21-35

When Jesus' disciples asked Him how many times they should forgive someone, Jesus gave them a surprising answer. As many times as a person asks for forgiveness, we should forgive. Jesus shared a story with His followers that revealed just how much God forgives us. Our forgiveness should look like God's forgiveness and when we understand just how much God has forgiven us, we will forgive others.

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Every person who has ever lived has chosen to reject God, and we deserve to be punished. We deserve complete separation from God because we have willfully chosen to disobey God's law and run from Him. However, God is gracious in that He gives us exactly the opposite of what we deserve. Instead of punishment, He provides a way of salvation by sending Jesus to take the punishment we deserve. We deserve punishment, but instead, we receive grace. Grace is getting a gift that we do not deserve. The way that we receive grace is through forgiveness. When we confess our sins the Bible tells us that He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins because of His redeeming grace.

BIG AIMS



Every child should know:

- That God is gracious
- That grace is when God gives us what we do not deserve and cannot earn



Every child should feel:

- Thankful for the gifts of grace that they have received



Every child should be able to:

- Recognize things that they have as gifts of grace from God



Every child should want to:

- To know about God's gift of grace through salvation and forgiveness of our sins

FAMILY DEVOTION: ALWAYS FORGIVE

God extends grace to us when He gives us forgiveness. When we understand how much He has forgiven us, we will forgive others as many times as they ask.

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BIBLE VERSE: EPHESIANS 1:7A

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses."

God gives us redemption through Jesus.

- All are in need of redemption and none are worthy of it.
- No one does enough good works to deserve God's redemption.
- God gives us redemption through His Son, Jesus.
- God's redemption is His gracious gift to us.

Jesus' death provides redemption for those who believe.

- Jesus willingly gave up His life on the cross to provide redemption.
- Those who believe in Jesus' work on the cross are freed from sin.
- Jesus' sacrifice provides redemption for us and frees us from the slavery of sin.

God's redemption provides forgiveness for our sins.

- Jesus' death on the cross means we can be forgiven for our sins.
- Those who turn away from their sin and believe in Jesus have their sins forgiven.
- This is God's redemption to the world and His gracious gift to all people.

GOD FORGIVES THE DEBT THAT
WE CANNOT PAY**BIBLE STORY: MATTHEW 18:21-35***The Unforgiving Servant*

Supporting Scripture: Isaiah 57:15; Isaiah 43:25

Teacher Introduction:

Jesus' response to Peter's question on forgiveness shows us the Father's heart. Jesus shares a story about a servant who owed a debt so great that he could never pay it. When the king asked to settle the debt, the servant was unable. The king ordered the man and his family to be sold. When the servant begged for mercy from the king, the king showed mercy. Not only did the king not sell the servant and his family, he also wiped away the servant's debt. God is like the king in this story. He wipes away our debt through the blood of His Son, Jesus.

When the servant received forgiveness for his debt, he had a chance to show that same forgiveness to someone who owed him a debt. The servant chose not to show the same forgiveness that was shown to him. Instead, he demanded to be paid what he was owed. God's desire is for us to forgive others just like He has forgiven us. This means that we will continue to forgive because we have received much forgiveness. God has been gracious to us and has forgiven us a debt that we could not pay.

Teaching Guide:

The guide below is provided to help you teach the narrative: *The Unforgiving Servant*. The four points are the Big Ideas that should guide your lesson as you share from Matthew 18:21-35 and teach the narrative: *The Unforgiving Servant*. Footnotes are provided for further study of the text and God's interaction with His people. Throughout the lesson, questions are placed to help you guide the preschoolers to think about and process the narrative: *The Unforgiving Servant*.

Opening Illustration:

Bring in a container of sand. Gather the children around the container and ask them to guess how much sand is in the container. Tell them there is more sand than you can count. Lead them in a discussion about how great our debt to God is and how He forgave our debt.

- We all owe God a sin debt. Our sin debt is so great we can't pay it ourselves. Our sin debt is like the sand in the container---it's really big.
- God paid our sin debt for us. He sent Jesus to take our place and to pay our debt.
- God is willing to forgive our debt, too. That's how much forgiveness God offers us.

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GOD FORGIVES THE DEBT THAT WE CANNOT PAY

BIG IDEA: GOD IS FORGIVING.

God is most holy, yet He chooses to forgive us.

- God is holy and righteous. He is without sin.¹
- God does not have to forgive anyone, but He chooses to forgive.
- Though God has never sinned, nor committed any wrong, He still chooses to forgive the world.
- God willingly forgives those who place saving faith in Jesus.

God forgives completely and eternally.²

- God does not offer forgiveness and then take it away.
- God does not hold grudges or keep a record of the wrongs committed by those who seek forgiveness.
- Jesus taught His disciples to forgive like God forgives.
- They should forgive always and not keep a record of how many times they have forgiven someone.

It is God's character to be forgiving.

- God is forgiving. It is who He is.
- We learn how to be forgiving from God.
- We can forgive others because God forgives us.
- The king's servant who begged for mercy and had his debt forgiven is like all of mankind. Our sin debt has been forgiven.



Help the children think of the biggest number they know. Make this fun for them and then show them how numbers continue to get bigger and bigger by writing a 1 and as many zeros that will fit on the board next to it. Tell the children that our sin debt is bigger than the biggest number, yet God forgives us our debt.

What is part of God's character? (It is part of God's character to be forgiving.)

What does God forgive? (He forgives our sin debt when we place saving faith in Jesus.)

1. Isaiah 57:15: God is most holy and righteous. There is none like Him.

2. Isaiah 43:25: God blots out our sin and doesn't think on it again. He forgives completely and eternally.

GOD FORGIVES THE DEBT THAT
WE CANNOT PAY**BIG IDEA: THE DEBT THAT WE OWE TO GOD IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR US TO PAY.****Our sin debt is impossible to pay on our own.³**

- The king's servant owed a debt too great to pay.
- The servant's debt was 20 years worth of wages.
- Our sin debt is so great we can never pay it ourselves.
- The king's servant could not pay the debt he owed the king on his own.
- We can't pay our sin debt on our own.

Our sin debt is impossible to pay because of our sinful hearts.

- The king showed his servant mercy and forgave his debt.
- Even though the servant experienced great forgiveness, he did not show forgiveness to others.
- His heart was sinful, just as our hearts are sinful.
- The king's servant did not offer the same forgiveness given to him to his fellow servant who was indebted to him.
- We cannot pay back our own debt because we are sinful.
- Our hearts are wicked.
- Anything we offer to God as payment is tainted by our sinfulness.
- We could never do enough things to pay for our sin debt.



Bring in an overnight bag or small suitcase that is packed with books. Ask the children to take turns moving the bag across the room. The bag should be too heavy for them to move. Tell them that the heavy bag is like our sin debt. It's too great for us to pay, but God forgives us our sin debt.

Why can we not pay our own sin debt? (We are sinful and cannot pay our sin debt.)

3. Luke 7:41-43: We all owe a sin debt that is too large for us to pay ourselves. Jesus pays our sin debt.

GOD FORGIVES THE DEBT THAT
WE CANNOT PAY**BIG IDEA: SOMEONE MUST PAY THE DEBT WE OWE.**

God provides payment for our debt.

- The king's servant could not pay his debt. The king forgave him his debt.
- The king's servant no longer owed the king a debt and he would no longer be sold.
- God forgives us our debt when we seek forgiveness.
- The king's servant sought to have his debt forgiven and the king forgave it.
- God forgives us our sin debt when we place saving faith in Jesus.



Bring in enough play money to give each child some. Tell them that God pays our sin debt by giving us Jesus just like you gave them money without them doing anything to get it.

The debt we owe separates us from God.⁴

- The king's servant could not serve the king and still owe his debt.
- The king's servant was to be sold in order to pay the debt that he owed.
- Because the king paid the debt, his servant could continue to serve him.
- God pays our sin debt because we can't.
- Our sinful hearts keep us from paying our sin debt.
- God makes a way for our sin debt to be paid.

Who provides payment for our debt? (God provides payment for our debt.)

What separates us from God? (Our sin debt separates us from God.)

4. Isaiah 59:2: Our sin separates us from God. We are in need of His forgiveness.

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BIG IDEA: GOD OFFERS FORGIVENESS THROUGH JESUS WHO PAYS OUR DEBT.

God chooses to forgive us when we don't deserve forgiveness.

- We don't deserve to have our debt paid for us.⁵
- The king's servant didn't deserve to have his debt forgiven because his heart was sinful.
- God still chooses to forgive us and show us grace.
- The king showed his servant grace by forgiving the debt that he owed.



Sing "Holy, Holy, Holy" with the children as you praise God for forgiving us our sin debt.

God offers us forgiveness through His Son, Jesus.

- God chose to send His Son to the world as a sacrifice for our sins.
- Through Jesus, God offers us forgiveness, but we have to believe in Jesus.
- The king's servant was offered forgiveness, but he chose not to forgive others and he was thrown into jail.
- We are offered forgiveness through the life and death of Jesus.

Jesus pays the debt we cannot pay.

- No one is able to pay their sin debt.
- Jesus paid our sin debt for us when He took on our sins on the cross.
- He is the only person worthy enough to pay our debt.
- The king's servant had his debt paid for him, but he didn't show forgiveness to others.
- He didn't really accept the forgiveness of the king.
- We can truly receive forgiveness when we turn away from our sin and believe in Jesus.
- Jesus pays our debt and makes a way for us to be forgiven.

Who pays our sin debt for us? (Jesus pays our sin debt because we cannot pay it.)

5. Romans 5:8: God did not wait for us to pay our own debt before forgiving us. He forgave when we were still sinners.

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HOOKS

**Forgiveness Find**

Write the statement “God Forgives Our Sin” on individual cards. Hide the cards throughout the room. Lead the children on a hunt to find the cards. When they’ve found them all, put them together and read the statement out loud. Lead the children in a discussion about how God forgives us our sin debt.



- God is very forgiving.
- He forgives our sin debt.
- We can’t pay our own sin debt because it is too great, but God forgives us our sin.

**Pass the Forgiveness**

Choose an object to represent forgiveness. Sit the children in a circle and have them pass the object around the circle while music is playing. When the music stops, the child with the object gets to stand up and say “God Forgives!”. Remind the children that God forgives us our sin debt so that we can forgive others. It is too great for us to pay, but God is so gracious, He forgives us our sin debt.

**Always Forgive**

Bring in a paper crown and a robe. Allow the children to role play the story of the king forgiving his servant’s debt. Allow the children to take turns playing the king and the servant. Lead them in a discussion about how God forgives us a great debt and we should forgive others also.

- God is so very forgiving to us.
- He forgives us our great sin debt. It is something that we can’t pay ourselves.
- Because God forgives us so much, we should forgive others as many times as they ask.