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## Part 4 • **FORGIVEN** and the power of forgiving

Matthew 6:12 *And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

So powerful is the aspect of forgiveness that Jesus places it in the middle of the prayer pattern and then re-emphasizes it at the end with a very strong statement! (Verses 14-15)

Although God has forgiven us of *all* of our own sin (Psalm 103:12; Colossians 2:13, 3:13; Hebrews 10:12; etc.), many people still feel justified in their unforgiveness, unaware that forgiveness is a "two-way street:" God will not forgive us if we hold on to unforgiveness.

### **Forgotten grace breeds unforgiving living.** -- Jack Hayford

1. Two examples of unresolved offenses and the consequences.
  - Cain's offense led to the first murder! (Genesis 4:1-8)
  - Absalom's offense divided Israel and cost him his life. (2 Samuel 13-19)
2. Unforgiveness gives Satan a clear advantage.
  - 2 Corinthians 2:10-11 *... I have forgiven that one for your sakes in the presence of Christ, lest Satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.*
3. Our unforgiveness has the power to defile others. (Scan the code to read an important article)
  - Hebrews 12:14-15 *...lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and many become defiled;...*
4. Matthew 18:21-35 is a study on the devastating consequences of unforgiveness.



- A man was forgiven of a debt he could NEVER pay then found someone owing him a payable debt. Because he was not able to repay it, he was thrown in prison. The man forgiven of a great debt was then also placed in prison and tormented. Jesus said that this would happen to us if we do not forgive!
- Christ paid a debt I could NEVER repay so that I can forgive others for a payable debt.

### **The power of forgiving others in the same way God forgives us.**

In Genesis 37-50 we read the story of Joseph who was sold into slavery by his brothers. He was then falsely accused and forgotten in prison. Later, as the second most powerful man in Egypt under Pharaoh, Joseph meets his brothers and reveals his true identity. He not only forgives (releases) his brothers, but he overcomes their evil with God's goodness! (Read Genesis 50:15-21)

1. *Joseph said to his brothers, "Do not be afraid, for am I in the place of God?"*
  - Joseph understood that vengeance was God's responsibility. (Romans 12:19 quoting Deuteronomy 32:35)
2. *"But as for you, you meant evil against me;"*
  - Joseph dealt realistically with the motive of his brothers. (2 Timothy 4:9-18)
3. *"...BUT GOD meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive."*
  - Joseph understood God's powerful and creative ability to bring His purpose out of an evil situation and saw the greater picture from God's perspective. (Romans 8:28)
4. *"Now therefore, do not be afraid; I will provide for you and your little ones." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.*
  - Joseph overcame evil with good, one of the most powerful principles in God's Word. (John 3:16-17; Romans 12:9-21)

**Action** -- In prayer, acknowledge and receive God's forgiveness for unforgiveness. (1 John 1:9) Then, overcome evil with God's goodness. (Romans 12:17-21) Deal with unforgiveness as soon as you sense it and determine to forgive those who may offend you.