

What Is Your Forgiveness Record?

Matthew 18:21-35

“How many times should I have to forgive someone?” Few questions seem so frustratingly pertinent. At least Peter asked Jesus if there is a limit. Some of us don’t even bother to wonder. We assume the grudges we bear are justified. “After all, my spouse aggrieved me. It’s not the first time. He/she has long a history of offending me. I’m justified in my anger.”

Jesus’ answer to Peter’s query may be the most neglected of the Master’s teachings. Who of us doesn’t bear a rancor? In many cases we’ve carried the bitterness for years. We avoid the people; won’t talk to them. Want nothing to do with them.

If you carry long-term ill-will, you have three problems. First, Paul advised: “Do not let the sun go down on your anger” (*Ephesians* 4: 26). Anger we carry past sundown burns our physical and spiritual insides. Second, we probably haven’t used Jesus’ formula for dealing with those who offend us (*Matthew* 18:15-20). Third, if we don’t forgive, we can’t expect God’s forgiveness. Are you sure you want to stay upset today, tonight, and a week from Tuesday?

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