



# MULTIPLYING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

## Book Summary by Thomas Hale

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## Forgiveness

A Book Teaching Guide, *Total Forgiveness* by R.T. Kendall  
Additional Thoughts Included by Thomas Hale

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### A FAMILIAR TEMPTATION

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**Matt 18:21-35** *Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. " Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like...*

The Rabbis taught that forgiveness was limited to three times, taken from the Old Testament book of Amos. Peter was looking for a reasonable end to forgiving those who offended him. It is our nature to be unforgiving! Jesus tells him there is no reckonable end to the number of times we are to forgive an offending brother.

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### A FREQUENT OCCURRENCE

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**Luke 17:1;4-5** *Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offenses (skandalon) will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! ...If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him." The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"*

**Ps 55:12-14** *If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God. (NIV)*

*2 Tim 4:14 Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. (NIV)*

*Matt 5:11 Blessed are you when (notice he did not say “if”) people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. (NIV)*

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## A FANTASTIC PROMISE

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*Matt 6:12 And forgive us our debts, as we (PIN) forgive our debtors. (KJV)*

**PRESENT INDICATIVE ACTIVE:** The Present Tense in the Indicative Mood (A statement of fact, present reality) represents contemporaneous action, as opposed to action in the past or the future.

**KEY THOUGHT:** As we are in the act of forgiving those who sin against us, God is forgiving us for our sins!

*Luke 23:34 Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (NIV)*

Notice that Jesus did not say, “I forgive you.” Asking the Father to forgive them showed that He had forgiven them and released them from their guilt and asked His Father not to punish or take revenge on them. God answered His prayer. Those offenders were among the very ones Peter addressed on the Day of Pentecost and were converted (Acts 2).

God can enable you to forgive those who hurt you, releasing them from guilt. You can let them out of your personal jailhouse. Most of us are prone to use silence to punish our offenders.

*Luke 6:37 Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive (apologize), and you will be forgiven. (NIV)*

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## WHAT GENUINE FORGIVENESS IS NOT

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- **Approval of the Offense**

Jesus forgave the woman found in adultery, but He did not approve of what she did. He told her, “Leave your life of sin.” (John 8:11)

- **The Pardoning of the Offense**

A pardon is a legal transaction that releases an offender from the consequences of their actions. You can forgive someone who commits a crime against you, but they are not pardoned from their punishment.

- Reconciliation

Reconciliation implies restoring the relationship after the offense to what it was before the offense. If your spouse is unfaithful with your best friend, you probably won't be best friends again. That is OK! Reconciliation is not a requirement for forgiveness.

- Denying the Offense

Living in denial is not forgiveness. True forgiveness can only come as we live in the reality of the offense. Love "keeps no record (*logizomai* - a bill) of wrongs. (1 Cor. 13:5). Forgiveness doesn't deny the wrong; it tears up the record!

- Forgetting the Offense

Forgiveness does not erase our memory. God knows our sins. He chooses to overlook and not bring them to His mind. One cannot forgive and forget. True forgiveness knows the nature of the offense, and still chooses to forgive! *Ps 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. (NIV)*

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## WHAT GENUINE FORGIVENESS IS

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- Knowing that an offense has been committed and still forgiving them.

*Eph 4:32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (NIV)*

*Col 3:13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (NIV)*

- Choosing to keep no record of wrongs.

Don't get historical! Stop rehearsing the offense. Make a choice to tear up the record of wrongs you have been keeping.

- Refusing to punish the offender.

Our human nature cannot bear the thought that those who have hurt us may get away with it! Genuine forgiveness not only forgives the offense but asks God to bless the offender.

*Rom 12:19 Do not take revenge (pull out the justice), my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (NIV)*

- Not telling what they did.

God will not expose my sins, neither should I expose those I have forgiven. Those who are quick to tell their offenses have not forgiven.

**Eph 4:29-31** Do not let any unwholesome (*sapros* - rotting fruit) talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid (*airo* - to lift, weigh anchor and sail away) of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, and every form of malice. (NIV)

- Treating the offender with kindness and compassion.

**Eph 4:32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (NIV)

Genuine forgiveness treats offenders with kindness and compassion.

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## HOW DO I KNOW THAT I HAVE FORGIVEN?

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- Joseph and total forgiveness

**Gen 37:3-11** Now Israel loved Joseph (17 years of age) more than any of his other sons because he had been born to him in his old age, and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. (NIV)

- Joseph had much to be bitter about

**Gen 37:23-28** So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing—and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it. As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt. Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed. So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

His brothers committed a wicked and evil act by selling him into slavery. He was falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife and imprisoned because of it.

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## THE EXAMPLE OF JOSEPH

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- He kept the offense as private as possible

**Gen 45:1** Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. (NIV)

This is what God does for us. *Micah 7:19* You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. (NIV)

- He was in the **power** position and refused to strike back

**Gen 45:3-4** Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close (not condescending) to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! (NIV)

- He wanted them to forgive themselves and not feel guilty

**Gen 42:21** They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come upon us." (NIV)

**Gen 45:5** And now, do not be distressed (pain, torture) and do not be angry with yourselves (a form of self-hatred) for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. (NIV)

- Joseph let them save face

With Himself:

**Gen 45:7-8** But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. (NIV)

With Their Father:

**Gen 45:9** Now hurry back to my father and say to him, "This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay. (NIV)

- Joseph forgave them for a lifetime

Seventeen years after forgiving his brothers, their father died.

**Gen 50:15-21** When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" So they sent word to

Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept. His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them. (NIV)

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## CONCLUSION

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- **Forgiveness is not an option**

*Matt 18:32-35 Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger, his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." (NIV)*

Forgive, and you shall be forgiven, release others, and you will be released.

- **Thoughts to reflect on**

"When you hold resentment toward another, you are bound to that person or condition by an emotional link stronger than steel. Forgiveness is the only way to dissolve that link and get free." - *Catherine Ponder*

"Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future." - *Paul Boose*

"Forgiveness is the cleansing fire that burns away old regrets and resentments."- *Jonathan Lockwood Huie*

"I can forgive, but I cannot forget, is only another way of saying I will not forgive. Forgiveness ought to be like a canceled note, torn in two, and burned up so that it never can be shown against one." - *Henry Ward Beecher*

"To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you." – *C.S. Lewis*

“Forgiveness is not about forgetting. It is about letting go of another person's throat...Forgiveness does not create a relationship. Unless people speak the truth about what they have done and change their minds and behavior, a relationship of trust is not possible. When you forgive someone, you certainly release them from judgment, but without true change, no real relationship can be established...Forgiveness in no way requires that you trust the one you forgive. But should they finally confess and repent, you will discover a miracle in your own heart that allows you to reach out and begin to build between you a bridge of reconciliation...Forgiveness does not excuse anything...You may have to declare your forgiveness a hundred times the first day and the second day, but the third day will be less and each day after, until one day you will realize that you have forgiven completely. And then one day you will pray for his wholeness...” – *William P. Young, The Shack*