

According to Matthew 6:14-15, a person who doesn't forgive others will not be forgiven by God. In the verses, Jesus states: "For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

This language is clear and concise, yet I've consistently heard preachers and others say that Jesus did not say, or mean, that God will not forgive you if you do not forgive others.

In Matthew 18:22, the passage reads: "Then Peter came up and said to him, 'Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?' Jesus said to him, 'I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.'"

In other words, Jesus tells Peter that he should forgive others seventy times seven, not just seven times, as Peter had initially suggested. I actually believe the number seventy times seven (or 490) is not meant to be a specific limit, but rather a symbolic way of saying that forgiveness should be unlimited and without conditions

While forgiveness is more straightforward when the offender repents, Jesus' teachings suggest that forgiveness should still be offered even without an apology. Some interpretations of Luke 17:3-4 state that we should forgive even if someone sins against us repeatedly and does not apologize. In Luke 6:27-28, 35-36 and Matthew 5:11 those scriptures emphasize that we should love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, and pray for those who mistreat us, as God is merciful to everyone.

Further, Jesus uses a parable found in Matthew 18:21-35 to explain this concept: It tells of a servant who is forgiven a massive, unpayable debt by his king (God), but then refuses to forgive a much smaller debt owed to him by another servant. The king (God), upon learning of the servant's unforgiving nature, has him punished. The parable highlights the importance of forgiveness and the consequences of failing to show mercy to others.

Jesus emphasized the importance of forgiveness, stating that we must forgive others for God to forgive us. He taught that forgiveness is not optional, but a necessary component of a relationship with God, and that it must be extended even to those who wrong us repeatedly.

In recent years preachers, teachers, and Christian councilors have twisted this doctrine taught by Jesus, himself. Believe what you may, but Jesus's teachings on this subject leaves no room for alternative interpretations, a person who doesn't forgive others will not be forgiven by God.