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One definition for Forgiveness: is the intentional and voluntary process by which a victim undergoes a change in feelings and attitude regarding an offense with an increased ability to show the offender well.

Forgiving people is sometimes not easy. The depth of the hurt varies with the type of offense committed by the individual and could be the result

of gossiping, lying, stealing, cheating and even murder in extreme situations. Our forgiveness may only be superficial. We think we have forgiven our offender only to see those emotions come back again. That is when we find out that we really didn't have forgiveness in our hearts. At those times we need to pray and study God's word. In Colossians chapter 3 we see that as God's chosen ones, we are to be holy and beloved, having compassionate hearts, full of kindness and humility, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these things put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

I believe that Chapter 18 of Matthew illustrates two types of forgiveness. I think when Peter asked Jesus about how many times he should forgive his brothers or sisters, he was thinking that there would be a limit to number of times that someone would have to be forgiving. Whereas, Jesus' response showed us that God has the capacity to keep forgiving us. Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, **" I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times."**

Through a parable Jesus then explained the consequences of not forgiving a brother or sister....."Then the master called a servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all the 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 handed 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 brothers and sisters from your heart."**

There are many other examples of forgiveness in the Bible. The forgiveness that Joseph showed to his family even though his brothers sold him into slavery (Genesis 37-50)....The denial of Jesus by Peter in Matthew 26:69-75.....The woman caught in adultery, John 8:1-11, that was going to be stoned to death. When Jesus asked, **"Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?** She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, **"Neither do I condemn you, go, and from now on sin no more."**

We must be willing to truly forgive others and realize that sometimes we sin and that we need God's forgiveness and His grace. **"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."**

