

Forgiveness? How many times, Lord?

Spiritual Works of Mercy “Bear wrongs patiently” & “Forgive offenses” (CCC 2447)

What do you think? Is Peter being generous? Seven Times? (Mt 18:21)

Matthew 7:2-5 “For as you judge, so will you be judged, and *the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you*. Why do you notice the splinter in your brother’s eye, but do not perceive the wooden beam in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove that splinter from your eye,’ while the wooden beam is in your eye? You hypocrite, remove the wooden beam from your eye first; then you will see clearly to remove the splinter from your brother’s eye.” ***SO, forgive & forgive!***

Matthew 5:23-24 “Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, go first and be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” (Present One’s Self and One’s Gift as pure-conscience to the Lord)

Matthew 6:12 “and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;”

Matthew 6:14-15 “For if you forgive others when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

Luke 11:4 “forgive us our sins for we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us”

John 8:7 “Let the one among you who is without sin, be the first to throw a stone at her.” ***Come to terms with one’s own sins and forgiveness before others.***

Luke 17:3-5 “Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And ***if he wrongs you seven times in one day and returns to you seven times saying, ‘I am sorry,’ you should forgive him.***”

NOTICE that the apostles respond to this seven times in one day appeal, as if that was too much to ask, with “Lk 17:5 “the apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith.” Jesus: “I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times” (Matt 18:22)

What does the Old Testament indicate is appropriate number of times forgiveness?

Is this related? Genesis 4:13-15 introduces God’s protective mark upon Cain to end the downward cycle of vengeful violence “Cain said to the LORD: “My punishment is too great to bear. Look, you have now banished me from the ground. I must avoid you and be a constant wanderer on the earth. Anyone may kill me at sight.” ‘Not so!’ the LORD said to him. ‘If anyone kills Cain, Cain shall be

avenged seven times'. So the LORD put a mark on Cain, so that no one would kill him at sight."

THEN Genesis 4:23-24 has Lamech extend the protection of God over himself saying to his wives *"Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; wives of Lamech, listen to my utterance: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for bruising me. If Cain is avenged seven times, then Lamech seventy-seven times."*

So what was the expectation of the OT regarding the number of times to forgive?

Leviticus 19:17-8 "You shall not hate any of your kindred in your heart. Reprove your neighbor openly so that you do not incur sin because of that person. Take no revenge and cherish no grudge against your own people. You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Is this pre-emptorily offering forgiveness?)

According to Jewish Tradition in Talmud, it is proper to forgive the day's offenses against you before going to sleep. Talmud Megillah 28a says that a rabbi claimed the reason he lived so long was that he never went to bed at night without first forgiving anyone who hurt him that day. Based on this, the Bed-Time Shema we say before sleep includes prayer of forgiveness of others... "May it be Your will, ...that I lie down in peace and that I arise in peace."

NT: Ephesians 4:26 "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger," Also, according to the set code of Jewish Law (1500's) the Shulchan Aruch:

Chapter 606 on the Requirement to Appease One Another on Yom Kippur

"For this reason, on the day before Yom Kippur, everyone should conscientiously appease every individual whom he has wronged. Even if he merely angered someone verbally, he must go and appease him, and request his forgiveness. When asking for forgiveness he should specify the wrong he committed against his fellow, but if this would cause his fellow embarrassment, he should not specify the wrong..... If the [offended party] is not appeased the **first time**, [the offender] should go back and try to appease him a **second time** with another form of conciliation. If he is still not appeased, he should go to him a **third time** to appease him with yet another form of conciliation..... If the [offended party] is not appeased [even] after the **third attempt**, one is under no further obligation to him."

NT: Ephesians 4:26 "Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun set on your anger,"

Old Testament powerful scenes of forgiveness among human to human reconciliation

Joseph & Brothers Reconcile Genesis 45:4-5 "Come closer to me," Joseph told his brothers. When they had done so, he said: "I am your brother Joseph, whom you sold into Egypt. But now do not be distressed, and do not be angry with yourselves for having sold me here. It was really for the sake of saving lives that God sent me here ahead of you." **See also Gen 50:15-21**

Jacob Esau make peace -Genesis 33:4-5 "Jacob himself went on ahead of them, bowing to the ground seven times, until he reached his brother. Esau ran to meet him, embraced him, and flinging himself on his neck, kissed him as he wept."