



Daily Verse and Comment

[Luke 17:3-5](#)

(3) Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. (4) And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him. (5) And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

King James Version

In verse 5, notice the apostles' reaction to Christ's instruction to forgive: "Increase our [faith](#)!" They understood that faith was required for this because forgiving an [offense](#) involves letting go of the desire for personal justice and trusting [God](#) to work it out. It is a matter of trusting that He is more perfectly aware of what happened than we are and that He has the perfect balance of justice and mercy, as well as the right timing. Forgiving the sins against us demonstrates that we trust that God has the matter in hand and that He will settle it in the best way possible.

Even before His crucifixion, [Jesus](#) overlooked the sins committed against Him, but to grasp its significance, remember who He was: The Word became flesh. Our Creator emptied Himself of all power, glory, and authority and stooped so low as to become a human being. After such incredible condescension, the Creator was reviled by His own creation! Yet, rather than reviling in return, He "committed Himself to Him who judges righteously" ([1 Peter 2:23](#)). Though having every right to demand satisfaction, He instead overlooked the arrogant transgressions of His creations and left it all in the Father's hands. He trusted that it would all be made right in the end because God is actively involved.

But our carnality *really* wants satisfaction. Even when merely slighted, all too often, our carnality is ready to launch Armageddon. Even if we do nothing, we may remain in a state of undeclared war for years! Sometimes,

this enmity continues even after the offender has died, and our carnality still digs him back up mentally to extract everything we feel he owes us. Our "old man"—the carnal man—wants to see others put in their places. He wants vengeance and the wrongs righted.

The old man, however, is not so keen on justice when *he* is the one incurring the death penalty. Then, he is intensely keen on mercy and grace! This is why an identifier of carnality in us is keeping a mental tab on others' debts and a reluctance to let them go. The carnal man would rather dwell on the debts *owed to him* than the debts *he* owes. *Yet the debt we owe is always bigger than the debts owed to us!*

If we are truly concerned about our debts being paid, we will not let someone else's lack of [repentance](#) hinder us from forgiving them. This is not to say that we never do or say anything about another's [sin](#). Forgiveness does not equate to passivity. In [Luke 17:3](#), Jesus says to rebuke a brother who sins against us. In [Matthew 18:15](#), He is not quite as forceful, instructing us to tell him his fault alone. But whether our brother hears us or not should not determine whether we forgive.

What is more, a Christian who is fully conscious of his own unpayable debt will approach his brother with a [meek](#) attitude. Recognizing his spiritual poverty, he will be motivated to have his sins forgiven, which is more important to him than the sins against him. The person who mourns over the violence that he has committed against his relationship with God will count it a small price to forgive the sins of others. And because he is [merciful](#), he will obtain mercy.

— David C. Grabbe

To learn more, see:

[Sins in the Balance \(Part Two\)](#)

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