

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT SERIES

MATTHEW 18:21–35

PATIENCE

Let's face it. Some people drive us up the wall. We try to pour out love to them, but they are totally insensitive to us. We try to be genuine, but they misunderstand us and subtly knife us in the back. How should we treat such people? Jesus tells us in the parable of the unmerciful servant.

1. Why is it hard to keep forgiving people who do the same thing wrong over and over?
2. Read Matthew 18:21–35. Jesus had just been talking about forgiveness when Peter approached him (v. 21). What had Peter been wondering as he listened to Jesus?
3. The rabbis taught that a repeated sin should be forgiven three times. (Peter's offer seems generous!) What was shocking about Jesus' reply (v. 22)?
4. Jesus' reply to Peter is enlarged by the parable in verse 23–35. What is the first servant's problem in this parable?
5. How was his problem solved far beyond anything he could have hoped for?
6. How does the master illustrate God's patience and forgiveness toward us?
7. How does the way the first servant was treated contrast with the way he treats his fellow servant (vv. 28–30)?
8. Why do you think he failed to be patient or forgiving after having been forgiven so much?

9. If we fail to treat others with patience and forgiveness, how will God treat us (vv. 34–35)?

Why is his judgment so harsh?

10. How can a deep appreciation for God's patience and forgiveness help you with the kind of person mentioned in question 1?

11. Pray that the God who has been so patient with you will help you be patient with others.