

WHAT IF . . . ?

There are many different circumstances that require a person to forgive. Read through the following scenarios, and decide how will you answer the questions that follow each one. Can you think of some other situations where forgiveness might be necessary?

Scenario: Your teacher embarrasses you in front of the class:

Teacher: Come up to my desk.

You: (Walk to desk) Yeah?

Teacher: You were looking at Charles test paper.

You: No! Really, I wasn't.

Teacher: Your eyes were on his test paper, not your own.

You: I wasn't looking at his paper.

Teacher: Sorry, but I know what I saw.

You: You're mistaken. I was just . . .

Teacher: No excuses. Hand in your test paper. You'll have to take an F.

Teacher embarrasses you:

Who needs to be forgiven? Why?

How might you treat the teacher if you didn't forgive?

If you did forgive, how would you treat him?

Would it be easy or hard to forgive in this circumstance?

Scenario: Someone spreads rumors about you that are not true:

Friend: You'll never guess what is going around the school.

You: Sounds like it can't be good.

Friend: You're right about that! And it's about you!

You: Me? What do you mean?

Friend: They say you're a snob and that you gossip about your friends.

You: Who in the world would say that? And who would believe it?

Friend: Well, Charles started it, and lots of people are believing it.

You: I thought he was my friend! Why would he say such a thing?

Friend: I don't know, but the rumor is spreading fast.

Friend spreads rumors:

Who needs to forgive? Why?

Do you need to forgive even if you are not asked?

How should you treat Charles if you have forgiven him?

Is it possible to "forgive and forget"?

Scenario: You feel that your parents have grounded you unfairly:

Parent: I told you to have your room clean before I got home. Look at it!

You: I'm sorry, but a friend called and . . . I just lost track of time.

Parent: You knew we were having company tonight.

You: I said I was sorry. I'll clean my room now.

Parent: I need your help in the kitchen now, but you are grounded for a week! That should give you enough time to clean this room.

You: That's not fair! That means I'll miss basketball tomorrow night!

Parent: You should have thought about that earlier.

"Unfair" grounding:

Who needs to forgive? Why?

Is it easier or harder to forgive someone you know well, such as a parent or sibling?

Do we have to forgive if we are right and they are wrong?

Scenario: You are beat up at lunch time, and a friend finds you:

Friend: Hey, what happened to you?

You: Some guys just jumped me in the park.

Friend: Are you going to be okay? You don't look very good.

You: My face feels like one big pain.

Friend: Who were the guys who did it? Where did they go?

You: I don't know their names, but I've seen them around school.

Friend: You sure don't look ready to go to class.

You: I think I'd better go home.

Friend: I think so too. Maybe I had better help you .

Beat up at school:

Who needs to be forgiven? Why?

Does forgiving mean we don't take any action?

What type of action would be appropriate? Not appropriate?

What good will you gain from forgiving?

ME? FORGIVE?

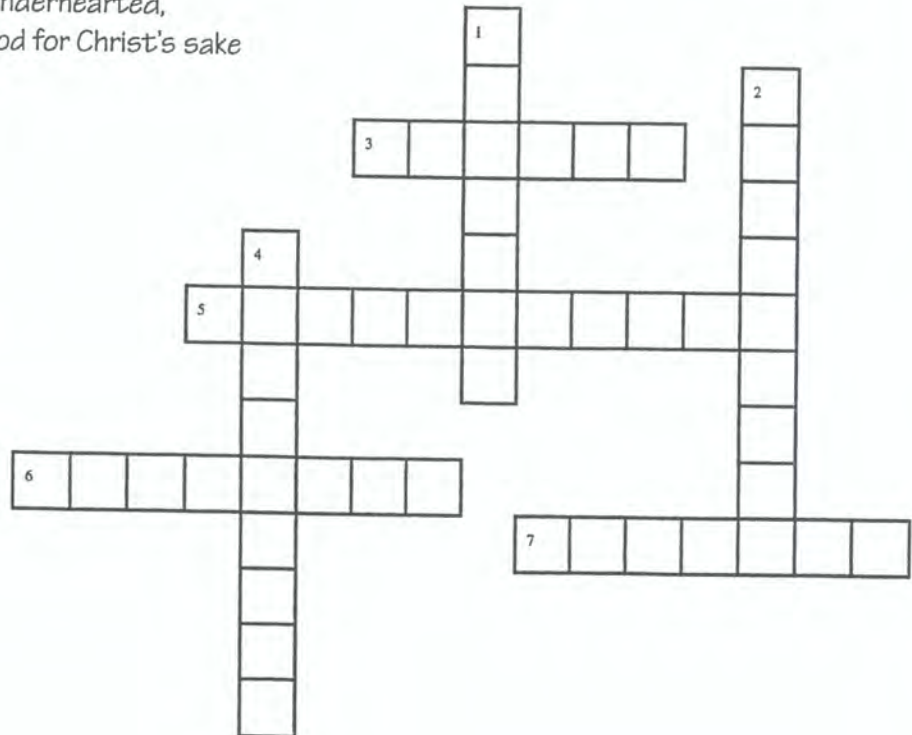
Jesus wants us to love one another and to show kindness. Whenever it is necessary, Jesus will help us to show His love through forgiveness. Find the missing word in each of the following verses to complete the puzzle below. The verses help us to understand about forgiveness.

DOWN

1. "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to _____; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." — Psalm 86:5
2. "And that repentance and _____ of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." — Luke 24:47
4. "Forbearing one another, and _____ one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." — Colossians 3:13

ACROSS

3. "For thy name's sake, O LORD, _____ mine iniquity; for it is great." — Psalm 25:11
5. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the _____ of sins."
— Colossians 1:14
6. "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath _____ you."
— Ephesians 4:32
7. "And I will _____ them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me."
— Jeremiah 33:8



Let's pass it on!

Most often, we think of forgiveness in these terms: a person who has done us wrong comes to us and says, "I'm sorry," and we say, "You're forgiven." But there is much more to the spirit of forgiveness than that. How would you react in these other circumstances?

1. A person was unkind but didn't realize his/her transgression. Since that time you have held it against them, thinking, "They just don't like me." Why would it be important to have a forgiving spirit in this case?

2. A person was really mean to you and never apologized. Now that person has passed away and the chance for reconciliation is gone. Why would it be important to forgive in this case?

3. A person is harsh on you and not at all apologetic, thinking he/she is completely in the right. Why is it important to forgive in this case?

In each of these circumstances, the person who benefits most from forgiveness is the forgiver.

How can we gain a spirit of forgiveness? By appreciating Christ's sacrifice and forgiveness to us, we can put these things into perspective. There is much for which we need to be forgiven—let's pass it on.