

Guided Bible Study

**Salendine Nook Baptist Church
Friendship (Growing Side By Side)**

Matthew 18 v. 12 - 35

**A modified Version of Scripture Union's
LifeBuilder Bible Study Series originally written by
Carolyn Nystrom**



About These Bible Studies

*For the purposes of our Bible Studies we will be using Scripture Union's LifeBuilder Bible Study Series. Our Theme for these studies is: **Friendship (Growing Side by Side)**. The studies were originally written by Carolyn Nystrom, but we will be modifying them in order that they become more usable for home study as church transitions between the church building and home during the ongoing Pandemic.*

These studies give us the opportunity to study the Bible in a greater depth and to reflect on what it is saying to us – much like we would do in our normal Wednesday Morning Bible Study. To give a sense of group study, it is suggested that you do the study on a Wednesday morning, for an hour, starting at 10.30am. Get yourself a tea or coffee, a Bible, pen and paper (for any notes you want to make) and begin studying.

Hope that you enjoy it!

Pastor Ian

Context

God created us to thrive in one another's presence. Friends help us to mature emotionally and spiritually. Friends love us no matter what. Friends teach us about forgiveness. As we look at these studies together, they introduce us to powerful stories about friendship in the Bible, and how we can apply the principles contained within these stories into our own lives. They also help us to discover the riches of godly friendship – the greatest friendship of them all.

Study 5 -

Forgiving

Friends

It was in *Love Story*, a movie of the 1970's, that we first heard the now – famous line, '*Love means never having to say you're sorry*'. It made some sort of sense in the context. The heroine died a sighing death a few perfect weeks into the relationship. Had she lived longer, the writers would have had to create a different line. Friends can't stay friends without forgiveness.

PERSONAL REFLECTION. *When has forgiveness (or lack of it) affected one of your friendships? Talk to God about what this reveals about you.*

When Jesus taught his followers about forgiveness, he told stories. He also created a series of steps that makes forgiveness possible. **Read *Matthew 18 v. 12 - 20***

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

- Jesus tells of two different situations in these verses. What is your emotional response to each? Explain your answer.
- What similarities can you find between the parable of the sheep and Christ's instructions about a brother who sins?
- Look at the four opportunities for reconciliation presented to the person who sins (**Matthew 18 v. 15 – 17**). What is difficult about each step?
- Why is it important to do the first step *before* taking any other action?
- Notice that the goal of this procedure, according to **Matthew 18 v. 15**, is that you may win the other person over. How might each of these steps help a person not to wander farther from God?
- In **Matthew 18 v. 21**, Peter follows the teachings about attempting to reconcile with people who wander by asking a logical next question: *'How many times shall I forgive my brother'*? What is risky about trying to forgive someone who has hurt you?
- **Read Matthew 18 v. 21 – 35**. Looking at the two examples of debt collection described here; find all the similarities that you can (**Matthew 18 v. 23 – 30**).
- In the first half of the servant parable, the amount owed is a large sum of money. Ten thousand talents represented the highest Greek number combined with the largest Roman unit of money. What does this suggest about the nature of our sin debt to God and the extent of God's forgiveness?
- What do you see in **Matthew 18 v. 31 – 35** that shows how the master viewed the lack of forgiveness in his servants?
- Bring to mind a person that you have had trouble forgiving. In a brief time of silence, ask God's forgiveness for your own lack of forgiveness. What is one way that you could demonstrate your desire to forgive this person?

Now or Later

Take a few moments to meditate on your own sins—both past and present. What has God forgiven you? Remember that God is the loving shepherd who went out looking for a single sheep who had wandered away. He is the master who forgave his servant all that he owed. Bring your sins to him and ask his forgiveness. Read aloud God's assurance to you as found in **Psalm 103 v. 8 - 13**



To help you in your study

The purpose of the study is: To forgive our friends in the same way that Christ has forgiven us.

In the two stories you should notice that both deal with a wanderer, both have the shepherd/brother going to great effort to bring the wanderer back, both show results of the wanderer's return (or loss) in heaven, both speak of celebration if the lost one returns, and both show the great value God holds for the sheep/person who wanders.

In question 4 we see one of Jesus' loving commands. It shows people how to forgive by keeping a problem contained '*just between the two of them*'. It also provides an opportunity for two people to better understand each other without spreading what may be false rumours. Disregarding this first step leads to gossip and creates enlarged hostility. Only if this first, private step is totally unsuccessful are we entitled to bring others into the conflict. Even then it is with the hope that a brotherly/sisterly relationship can continue – through repentance and forgiveness. (**Matthew 18 v. 15**)

Jesus may have used the phrase, '*treating someone as a pagan or a tax collector*', because it was a common synonym in Jewish culture for excommunication. But we must also consider how Jesus himself treated pagans and tax collectors. He healed them, he ate with them, he even called on to become his disciple. So Jesus may have intended that we treat this persistent wanderer with all the kindness (and

wariness) that we would treat any outsider we wished to win to faith.

Matthew 18 v. 19 – 20 is often misused as a recipe for getting what we want from God when we pray. The context, however, assumes a situation of church discipline. It also assumes that prayers *'in my name'* ask what Jesus himself would give if he were present.

Contact

Address

Salendine Nook Baptist Church

Moor Hill Road

Salendine Nook

Huddersfield

West Yorkshire

HD3 3SF

Telephone - 01484 651845

Facebook - @SalendineNookBaptistChurch

Website - www.snbch.org.uk

Minister - minister@snbch.org.uk

Secretary - church.secretary@snbch.org.uk

Treasurer - treasurer@snbch.org.uk

Web Administrator - web.administrator@snbch.org.uk

Graphics and Media - snbch.media@snbch.org.uk

