

# Luke 17:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

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Unlimited forgiveness: '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.' The repetition 'seven times in a day' (ἑπτάκις τῆς ἡμέρας, heptakis tēs hēmeras) indicates repeated offenses in a short period. Despite frequent failures, if the offender 'turn again to thee' (ἐπιστρέψῃ, epistrepsē, turns back) 'saying, I repent' (λέγων, Μετανοῶ, legōn, Metanoō), 'thou shalt forgive him' (ἀφήσεις αὐτῷ, aphēseis autō). The future tense indicates obligation, not option. Seven represents completeness in Scripture—unlimited forgiveness is required. This doesn't mean enabling sin or refusing accountability but extending forgiveness whenever genuine repentance is expressed. Christians must mirror God's unlimited forgiveness toward them.

## Historical Context

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Peter later asked whether forgiving seven times was sufficient (Matthew 18:21), showing he thought this was generous. Jesus' response—seventy times seven—established that no limit exists for forgiveness (Matthew 18:22). This teaching contradicts natural human inclination toward vengeance or holding grudges. The parable of the unforgiving servant (Matthew 18:23-35) teaches that those who've been forgiven infinite debt by God must forgive others' comparatively small offenses. Refusal to forgive indicates one hasn't truly experienced God's forgiveness. The requirement that the offender says 'I repent' doesn't mean

holding unforgiveness until apology comes—we must have a forgiving spirit even if apology never arrives. But reconciliation requires both parties: our forgiveness and their repentance.

## Related Passages

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**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. How does understanding your own forgiveness by God motivate forgiving others who repeatedly offend you?
2. What's the difference between forgiving someone and being reconciled to them?
3. How do you balance unlimited forgiveness with appropriate boundaries against ongoing abuse or manipulation?

## Interlinear Text

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|       |       |             |       |          |             |         |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------------|-------|----------|-------------|---------|-------|-------|
| καὶ   | ἐὰν   | ἐπτάκις     | τῆς   | ἡμέρας   | ἀμάρτη      | εἰς     | σὲ    | καὶ   |
| And   | if    | seven times | G3588 | in a day | he trespass | against | thee  | And   |
| G2532 | G1437 | G2034       |       | G2250    | G264        | G1519   | G4571 | G2532 |

|             |       |          |            |       |       |        |          |
|-------------|-------|----------|------------|-------|-------|--------|----------|
| ἐπτάκις     | τῆς   | ἡμέρας   | ἐπιστρέψῃ  | ἐπὶ   | σὲ    | λέγων, | Μετανοῶ  |
| seven times | G3588 | in a day | turn again | to    | thee  | saying | I repent |
| G2034       |       | G2250    | G1994      | G1909 | G4571 | G3004  | G3340    |

|                    |      |
|--------------------|------|
| ἀφήσεις            | αὐτῷ |
| thou shalt forgive | him  |
| G863               | G846 |

## Additional Cross-References

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**Romans 12:20** (Parallel theme): Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

**Matthew 5:44** (Parallel theme): But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

**Matthew 6:12** (Parallel theme): And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

**Matthew 18:16** (Parallel theme): But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

**Matthew 18:35** (Parallel theme): So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

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