

The word "forgive" in this verse is the same word that is used in verses 27 and 32 of this passage where it says the king forgave the servant who owed him ten thousand talents. In both of these verses the word "forgive" means that the king treated the servant who owed him ten thousand talents just as though the debt had not been incurred. Thus the word "forgive" in this verse means that Peter is to treat the one who offends him on a personal level just as though the offense had not been committed. This implies that if Peter forgives the one who offends him, he can't harbor any malice in his heart towards that person nor take revenge against that person.

To forgive then in this verse means that we are to treat the one who offends us on a personal level just as though the offense had not been committed. But you say, "that is hard!" Yes, it is hard! But that is what it means to forgive, and unless we do that when someone offends us, we haven't forgiven that person.

Once there was a little boy and he was asked, "What is forgiveness?" The little boy thought for a moment and then he said this, "Forgiveness is the odor that flowers breathe when they are trampled under foot." How true that is, for when we are trampled under foot by the offenses committed against us, we are to breathe the sweet odor of forgiveness, that is, we are to treat the one who offended us on a personal level just as though the offense had not been committed. ^{New paragraph} Second, the frequency of forgiveness. We are to forgive an unlimited number of times.

In verse 21 of this passage Peter asks Jesus this question, "Lord, how (often) shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?" This