

# If my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him?

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Since man exists on earth, God has always educated him to compassion, mercy, and forgiveness. He has always taught him that he is a sinner in need of perennial forgiveness, without interruption. If he wants to be forgiven, he must forgive his brothers. He cannot plead with God for his sins who does not forgive his own brother who sinned against him. The forgiveness of God is also a fruit of our forgiveness, our piety, mercy, and compassion towards every sinner.

The vengeful will suffer the Lord's vengeance, for he remembers their sins in detail. Forgive your neighbor's injustice; then when you pray, your own sins will be forgiven. Should a man nourish anger against his fellows and expect healing from the Lord? Should a man refuse mercy to his fellows, yet seek pardon for his own sins? If he who is but flesh cherishes wrath, who will forgive his sins? Remember your last days, set enmity aside; remember death and decay, and cease from sin! Think of the commandments, hate not your neighbor; of the Most High's covenant, and overlook faults. (Sir 28,1-7).

But there is another truth to be put in the heart. God does not want that we persist in sin. The stubbornness could become sin against the Holy Spirit. In this case, our guilt would remain not forgiven for eternity. Since we must ask for forgiveness immediately, we must immediately grant forgiveness. How much the other person can trust in our mercy, so we can trust in the mercy of God. Our measure of piety will also be the measure of God's mercy towards us.

Rely not on your wealth; say not: "I have the power." Rely not on your strength in following the desires of your heart. Say not: "Who can prevail against me?" for the Lord will exact the punishment. Say not: "I have sinned, yet what has befallen me?" for the Lord bides his time. Of forgiveness be not overconfident, adding sin upon sin. Say not: "Great is his mercy; my many sins he will forgive." For mercy and anger alike are with him; upon the wicked alights his wrath. Delay not your conversion to the Lord, put it not off from day to day; For suddenly his wrath flames forth; at the time of vengeance, you will be destroyed. Rely not upon deceitful wealth, for it will be no help on the day of wrath. (Sir 5,1-8).

Today, Jesus asks us for an unlimited forgiveness, without measure, without calculation, total.

*Then Peter approaching asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times. That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount. Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, in payment of the debt. At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.' Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan. When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, 'Pay back what you owe.' Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.' But he refused. Instead, he had him put in prison until he paid back the debt. Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?' Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart." When Jesus finished these words, he left*

*Galilee and went to the district of Judea across the Jordan.*

Our debt with God is priceless, because unusually large. The Lord condones it to us, has mercy on us, on one condition: that we forgive the infinitesimal debt the brother has toward us. The brother owes us the price of a fly. We must give God an infinite price. For a nothing God forgives us all. Virgin Mary, Mother of the Redemption, Angels, and Saints make us rich in mercy.