

THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Matthew 18:34-35
Lesson #17
Empathy Discipline
01/19/2020

Galatians 5:14

“For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, “you shall **love your neighbor as yourself.**”



The essence of the Law is **empathy.**

1

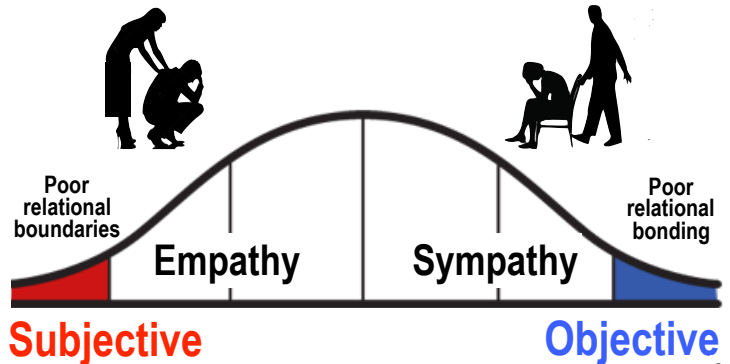
“The opposite of anger is not calmness, it’s empathy.”

Dr. Oz



2

Love is compassion
(empathy + wisdom)
in action.



3

“Mature love can discern when to wash feet, when to walk away.”

“It will know when to kick back and when to kick butt.”

4

How should we respond to those who have hurt us?

Matthew 18

“²¹ Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. ²³ For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a certain king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves.”

What follows is the parable of the ungrateful slave.

Those who have been forgiven should be forgiving.

5

Matthew 18

“³⁴ And his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him.
³⁵ So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”



**But this should
raise questions
for Bereans.**

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Observations

- **The Occasion of the parable** is a question about the limitations of forgiveness.
- **The Focus of the parable** is the importance of compassion.
- **The Point of the parable** is that those who have been forgiven should be forgiving.
- **The conclusion of the parable** seem to cheapen the gracious act of the King.



**What is the
relationship between
grace and behavior?**

7

**The difference between stumbling
blocks and stepping stones**



**is how we view them
and use them.**

8

The Prodigal Son's insight

Luke 15:17 “But when he **came to his senses**, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have more than enough bread, but **I am dying here with hunger!**’”

He feels the pain of his choices!



**How might the
ungrateful slave
come to his senses?**

9

Some thoughts

1. Harmonizing vs. 34-35 with vs. 26-33 is done in **different** ways.

- **Ignore the problem as a mystery.** This is too often the approach of commentators.
- **Faith is notarized by works.** This is a common approach in some Christian circles. **TRUE** believers will **always, generally, sometimes** forgive others.
- **Theological context.** This suggests that the Old Covenant emphasis on reconciliation with God through works (under the Law) is the proper context for much of Jesus’ teaching.

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Some thoughts

2. The verb form of the word “torturers” vs.34 is often translated “pain” or “torment” which may suggest a **temporal experience**.

Matthew 4:24

“And the news about Him went out into all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, taken with various diseases and **pains**, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.”

Matthew 8:6

“Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering great **pain.**”

11

Some thoughts

3. There is no way the ungrateful slave could ever pay back the **extravagant** debt in this parable.

10,000 talents of silver = 60-100 million days wages

100 denarii = a 100 days wages

This suggests that the language is **hyperbole** and should be understood as such. We might note that the demands of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount use similar language. (Matt.5:13-48)

plucking out eyes, cutting off hands that offend vs.29f
eternal condemnation for calling someone a "fool" vs.22

12

Some thoughts

4. The point of the parable is "**empathy**" not "justice" suggesting that the punch line is to help the unforgiving slave be empathetic.

Interpretive Paraphrase vs.34-35

"I am so concerned that you become empathetic that if you do not learn the easy way through being treated graciously, you will hopefully learn the hard way by being put in social circumstances where others will treat you as you treat them."

13

Some thoughts

5. **Discipline** is a common teaching tool in Scripture.

Mark 4

"²⁴ And He was saying to them, "Take care what you listen to. **By your standard of measure it shall be measured to you;** and more shall be given you besides. ²⁵ For whoever has, to him shall more be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him."

14

1 Corinthians 5

"¹ It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. ² And you have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst. . . . ⁵ **I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh,** that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (vs.11)

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2 Corinthians 7

"⁹ I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; **for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.** ¹⁰ For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death."

16

John 15

"¹ I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. . . . ⁸ By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples."

- "**fruit**" is being a **recipient** of God's forgiveness.
- "**more fruit**" is being a **dispenser** of forgiveness.
- "**pruning**" is the **discipline** that brings this about.

**The fruit of God's grace was
IN the servant's life but not yet
THROUGH his life to others.**

17

Pruning for Fruitfulness - *Matthew 18:15-17*

¹⁵ And if your brother sins, go and **reprove him in private**; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen to you, **take one or two more with you**, so that *by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.* ¹⁷ And if he refuses to listen to them, **tell it to the church;**"

When all else fails turn them loose in the world to learn the hard way.

"and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him **be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.**" (sent back to a "distant country" Lk.15:13)

18

Hebrews 12

¹⁰ For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, **that we may share His holiness.** ¹¹ All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness."

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Revelation 3

¹⁷ Because you say, 'I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,' and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, ¹⁸ I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. ¹⁹ **Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent.**"

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Matthew 7

¹ Do not judge lest you be judged. ² **For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.** ³ And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

21

Ephesians 2:8-10

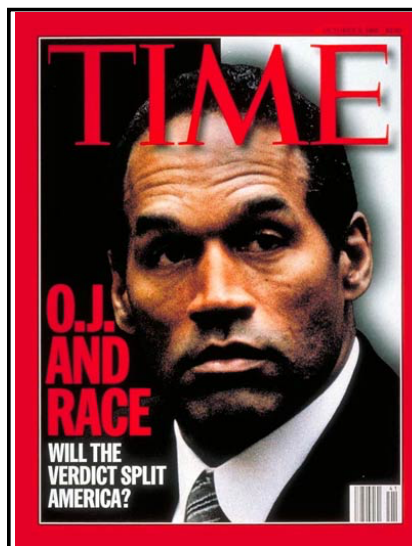
Forgiven

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

Forgiving

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

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The evidence was a slam dunk for conviction.

The verdict suggested that the L.A. PD and Racism (not O.J.) were on trial.

Could it be that God is more concerned about developing "white" empathy than justice?

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