

Questions for Cubs

NOTE TO PARENTS/TEACHERS:

The goal of this questions-and-answers section is to initiate interaction between you and your kids. Please do not just read the questions and answers to your kids. These answers are given for you at an adult level to think about and to process. Once that is accomplished, you can then translate them into appropriate answers for your kids.

Lesson

Forgiveness

Key Verse

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.
(Ephesians 4:32)

Ear Check (Story Comprehension)

- Q: Hugh invites Staci to try out his new what?
A: *Derby car*
- Q: Staci rides down the hill in the derby car without wearing what safety device?
A: *A helmet*
- Q: Hugh tells Paw Paw Chuck that he wants to see Staci to tell her what?
A: *That he is sorry she got hurt*
- Q: Why does Officer Hunt take Hugh away?
A: *He suspects that Hugh cut the brake line for the derby car.*
- Q: After asking for Hugh's forgiveness, what does Staci give Hugh?
A: *Her soapbox derby car*

Heart Check (Spiritual Application)

- Q: Do Christians need to forgive others even when the offender does not ask for forgiveness?

A: We sure do. The interesting thing about this is that forgiving someone who has offended you will result in good things for you. When you hold on to unforgiveness, it wiggles in under your skin and becomes a part of who you are. Anger, irritation, and preoccupation with the offender begin to guide your choices and moods. Even worse, unforgiveness deeply affects your relationship with God in a very negative way. To forgive someone, especially when that person has not asked for forgiveness, often seems like a crazy thing to do. It feels as if the person will get away with what they did. It certainly feels unfair, but when God tells us to do something, even something difficult, we need to trust that the end result will be good. That's what faith is all about (Ephesians 4:31–32).

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Q: If I am the one who has harmed or offended someone, do I have to ask for his or her forgiveness? What happens if he or she refuses to forgive me?

A: Asking for forgiveness is the first step in repairing a broken relationship (James 5:16). In spite of the fact that it will probably be difficult and embarrassing, it is profoundly important to try to fix any damage that you may have caused. If people refuse to forgive us—and they often will—we are to show compassion, humility, and grace. The other person may need time to heal before he or she can forgive us, and they might simply never forgive us. Their response, however, is not the point. The bottom line is we need to obey God and trust Him to bring something good out of the situation.

“I” Check (*Personal Application*)

1. C.J. was quick to jump to a conclusion about Hugh based on his previous experience with him. Have you ever jumped to a conclusion about someone, for example, a sibling or the school bully? Why is it dangerous to do that?
2. Read Psalm 103:1–12. When we ask God to forgive us, He does. The Bible says in Jeremiah 31:34 that after He forgives us, He forgets that we even sinned. The passage in Psalms points out that God has removed our transgressions or sins “as far as the east is from the west.” What do you think the writer, King David, meant by that phrase?
3. What kind of forgiveness did Hugh offer C.J. and Staci? Why do you think it was hard for him to forgive them? Have you had a hard time forgiving someone for something he or she did to you? The way God forgives us should be a model for how we forgive others. Perhaps you’ve heard the phrase “forgive and forget.” What do you think that means?

Director's Notes

It's hard to forgive someone who has harmed you, but it is even harder to forgive someone who has harmed someone you love. As Christians, even this harder scenario is required of us. We are not physical beings who in the future will become spirits. We are, right now, spiritual beings who live in a physical body. You may think a physical being can live with anger, hatred, and vengeance and still function properly, but you are wrong. Physically, the results of this mind-set can range from harmful to disastrous. Spiritually, the damage is always devastating.

Matthew 6:15 says, "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." This is a shocking bit of Scripture. There are other verses like it, and they leave us with no way to wiggle out of what they say. They do not mean that we can lose our salvation, but they do mean we will lose out on other important things the Father wants to give us. Why? Because our unforgiveness affects the fellowship we have with Him. Scripture does not provide a list of things that will occur if a Christian is living without the Father's forgiveness, but it is safe to say that the relationship is severely damaged. Could this explain why our prayers are so ineffective, our passion for God so weak, and our ministry such drudgery? To pursue the spiritual life without spiritual power from the Father is frustrating, exhausting, and ineffective. I would suggest that whatever the details of living without the forgiveness of the Father are, they are not good. It is a bad, bad place, and we don't want to be anywhere near it. If there is unforgiveness in your heart, you would be wise to stop what you are doing and give it to God. Ask Him to empower you to forgive. He will enable you to forgive, and then He will forgive you.

I have known people who have lived with bitterness and unforgiveness for so long that they are not even conscious that it is there. We would all be wise to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any unforgiveness that we might have. This episode touches on a small bit of the importance of forgiveness, and *Paws & Tales* will certainly do more on this topic in the future. For parents and teachers who are seeking God earnestly, or for those who want to begin, forgiveness of others is critical—our intimacy with the Father depends on it.



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