ON FORGIVENESS
New Testament Lesson #61

Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, asked Jesus, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?"

Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but 70 times seven."

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

• When Jesus answered that Peter should forgive 70 times seven, it is doubtful that he meant a literal 490 times. More likely, he meant that forgiveness must have no limits.

• Jesus made this same point in Luke 17:3-4.

• The NRSV translates Jesus' answer as "77 times," but most other versions translate it as "70 times seven."

• The importance of forgiving another is also seen in Jesus' teaching about prayer. It is not possible to gain forgiveness for oneself if one is unwilling to forgive others (see Matthew 6:12-15).

• The word "brother" is translated "a member of the church" in NRSV. Clearly, the forgiving of others applies to both men and women.

• This incident recalls Genesis 4:24. Earlier in Genesis, God threatened a sevenfold vengeance on any who attacked Cain, the murderer of Abel. But Lamech, when he had committed murder, boasted that he did not need God's protection, but would avenge himself: "If Cain is avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold." The forgiveness Jesus spoke of was the exact opposite of the vengeance that Lamech boasted of.

On Forgiveness

I. Peter asked Jesus how many times he should forgive his brother when he sinned against Peter.

II. Peter wondered if seven times was enough.

III. Jesus answered, "Not seven times, but 70 times seven."

ANSWER KEY:

Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, if another person sins against me, how many times shall I forgive him?"

seventy times seven

S omeone asked Jesus an important question.
Find who and what below!

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Count to the
proper letters
and write them
on the lines.

___ ___ ___ ___ ___   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
B+14 P-11 0+5 V-17 Z-8   N-13 H+11 Q-6 J-5 T-16

                           "
___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ,   ___ ___ ___ ___ ,   ___ ___
M-3 K-6 B+17 P+5 Z-7   A+11 W-8 D+14 X-20   A+8 L-6

___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
J-9 B+12 Z-11 H+12 C+5 U-16 D+14 F+10 Y-20 G+11 E+14 D+11 E+9

___ ___ ___ ___   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___   ___ ___ ,
I+10 V-13 T-6 H+11   O-14 R-11 U-20 B+7 W-9 G+12 Z-6   D+9 Q-12

___ ___ ___   ___ ___ ___ ___   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
T-12 C+12 L+11   B+11 S-18 V-8 J+15   L+8 R-9 D+9 U-16 G+12

___ ___ ___ ___ ___   ___   ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___
Y-6 A+7 Q-16 B+10 X-12   V-13   S-13 D+11 F+12 R-11 C+6 B+20 J-5

___ ___ ___ ?"
C+5 R-9 G+6

Find the answer to that
question. Cross out any letters
you find 6 or more times;
unscramble the letters on each
line to find the answer.

B	D	G	J	J	K	D	R	A
Y	V	E	S	E	K	T	N	B
A	K	D	R	G	A	K	G	R
M	S	I	A	E	B	T	D	K
G	R	B	A	K	D	J	R	A
V	S	R	N	G	E	E	J	G
K	J	B	J	D	A	B	J	R

_____

_____

_____

Name _____

Forgiving others is important. It helps make you and other people feel better right away.

Circle the hidden letters: F - O - R - G - I - V - E

Name _____