WE MUST
FORGIVE
ALWAYS

9 WoL

WORD OF LIFE

«I say to you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times»

Mt 18:22

From the commentary of Chiara Lubich
Adapted by the Gen 3 Center

Under the magnifying glass...

Peter was listening to all the beautiful things Jesus was telling them and then he asked him: **"Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often do I have to forgive him? Seven times?"** And Jesus told him, "Not seven times, but seventy-seven times."

With these words Jesus is telling **us that those who follow him have to forgive always, an unlimited number of times.**

Forgiveness doesn't mean just forgetting about something, it's not being weak, it doesn't mean to approve of something that is wrong or evil. It doesn't mean just being indifferent.

It means to accept our neighbors as they are, notwithstanding the wrong they did to us, just as God accepts us, notwithstanding our faults.

To forgive means to offer the one who has wronged you the **opportunity** of having a new relationship with you. It makes it possible for both of you **to start life over again, and to experience a future in which evil doesn't have the last word.**

You will say, **"But that's hard!"** And you're right. This is the challenge of being a Christian. After all, we are following Jesus who, as he was dying on the cross, asked His Father to forgive those who had caused his death, and then he rose from the dead.

Let's be courageous! Let's start living like this! We'll find peace in our hearts, a peace we have never experienced before, and a joy we have never known.

Forgiveness means accepting others as they are.

This month I will count how many times I managed to forgive others.

This is what happened to… David from Italy

One day at school, my friends warned me about a boy who wanted to beat me up…

I was really surprised because I couldn't think of any reason for him to be angry with me. I tried not to think about it, but going home that day on the train, that boy was sitting right in front of me. When he saw me, he came back and slapped me hard across the face. I was shocked and angry because there was no reason for it, and I was really tempted to punch him back. In the meantime my friends came around and looked at me as if to say, **"Come on! Give it to him! Show him you're not afraid of him!"**

It was a very important moment, because I knew that if I didn't react, my friends would make fun of me, and that boy would be encouraged to bully other boys like me. But all of a sudden I realized that this was my opportunity to really live the Word of Life, knowing that forgiving doesn't mean just being submissive. So while everyone was waiting for me to jump on him, I calmly sat down and in my heart I said, **"I forgive you!"** It was like throwing cold water in his face because he was expecting a violent reaction.

When we got off the train, one of my friends asked why I had acted liked that and I was able to tell him the Word of Life about forgiving. **"The Gospel,"** I told him, **"is more powerful and more effective that any slap in the face!"**

Send your experiences to our Forum at:
www.teens4unity.org