

MP X Rules of the Game
By Greg Rangel

“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).

As we continue to deal with the rules of the game, we must first say that marriage is definitely not a game, but a decision that has affected our everyday life for the rest of our lives. Some no doubt regret ever getting married, while others like myself have enjoyed every single moment. Even though marriage is not a game, we must still keep the rules of marriage because if we don't we will not only have a miserable life and marriage, but others will too.

One of the most important rules within the marriage is forgiveness. Paul the Apostle wrote in Colossians 3:13, *“Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.”* One of the main reasons that divorce takes place is because one of the two parties fails to practice forgiveness. Forgiveness is not practiced because the party that fails to forgive his spouse believes that the act is so horrendous that perhaps not even God can forgive such an act. But in reality there is nothing that our spouse can do unto us that we cannot forgive, everything is forgivable, even adultery. The reasons that forgiveness is not practiced are because of pride, and because we believe that somehow we are much better than the offending party. But we are so wrong because none of us are perfect. Every one of us has sinned against God.

One day Peter asked Jesus a question and said, *“...Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven”* (Matt. 18:21-22). The Jews taught that a man was to forgive another three times only, but not the fourth. So Peter being the person that he was, that is very unstable and speaking before thinking probably thought, ‘well, I will be very spiritual and go up to seven times.’ But Jesus goes on to say that, not until seven times, but unto seventy times seven (70x7), which equals up to 490 times.

Of course Jesus is not speaking literally. He is not meaning a literal 490 times, but an indefinite amount of times. I don't think that someone could actually keep track of the amount of times someone else offends them. By the time they reach 20 times they will probably start losing track. To further show what He is saying, Jesus uses a parable about forgiveness. He gives an example of a man that owed his lord ten thousand talents, which perhaps equals out to a few million in our currency. So his lord commanded him and his family to be sold until everything was paid. The servant begged his lord for forgiveness. Because his lord was very merciful, the servant was forgiven.

The same servant had someone that owed him a hundred pence, which equals out to about \$45 in our currency. But instead of forgiving his own servant the few dollars that was owed to him, the unmerciful servant threw him in jail. The lord that forgave this servant a few million heard about his servant's unmerciful action and punished him for it (see Matt. 18:21-35).

The point of what Jesus taught there in that parable is that, since He has forgiven us for everything that we have done against Him, and every debt that we could not pay has been paid by Him when He nailed our sins to the cross, why would we be so unmerciful to forgive someone else that has offended us? Why would a husband or a wife not be willing to forgive one another if Jesus Christ has forgiven us?

Forgiveness must be practiced by both parties if the marriage is expected to succeed. If you as a husband or as a wife fail to forgive your spouse, you can bet on it that your marriage will not work. You will soon find yourself down at the courthouse for a hearing after you have spent a few thousand dollars that you did not have hearing the judge say how much more that you have to pay your spouse. There is nothing so horrendous that your spouse has done to you that you cannot forgive.