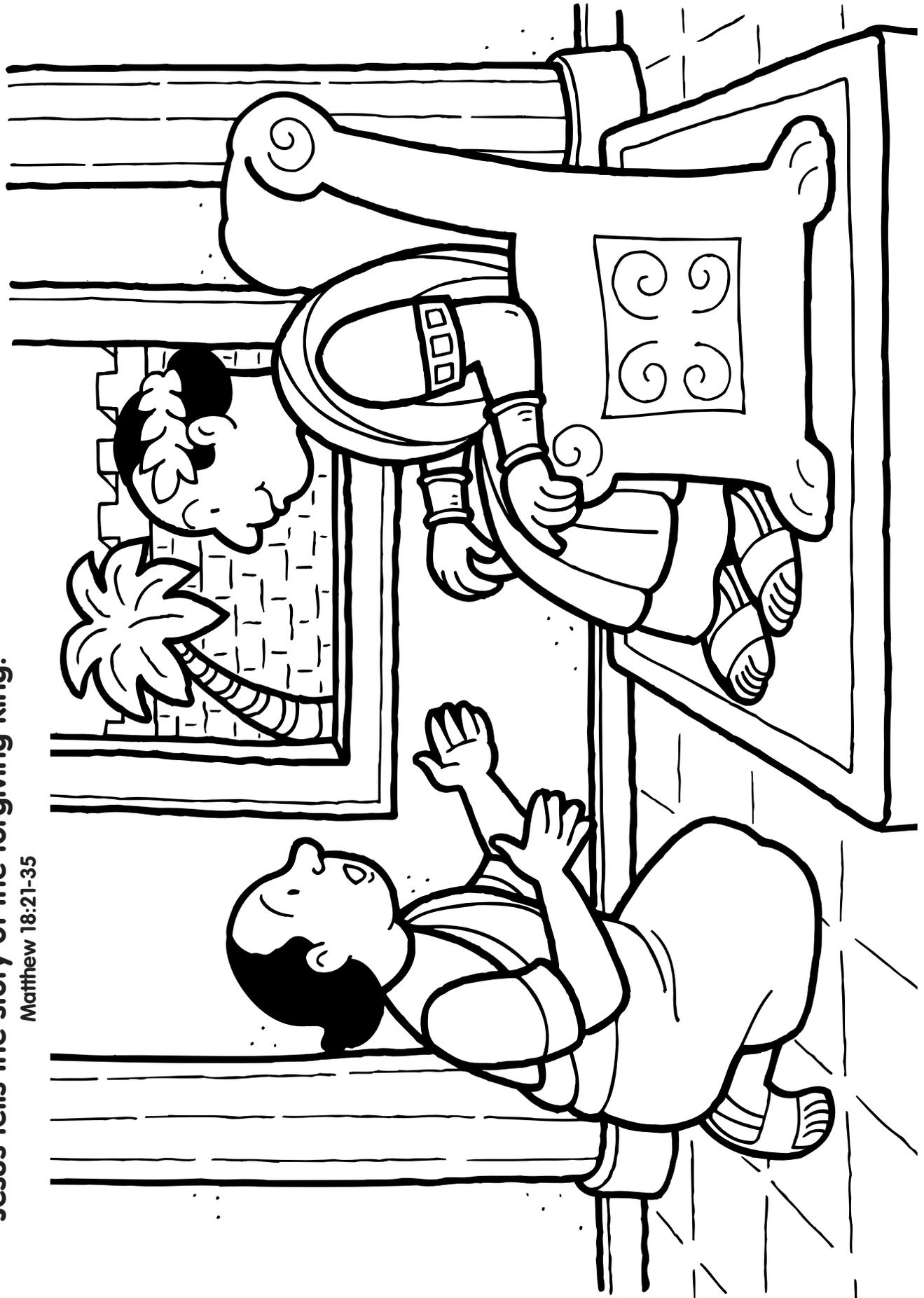


Jesus tells the story of the forgiving king.

Matthew 18:21-35



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One day, Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, how many times should I forgive a person who has been unkind to me?" Jesus answered Peter by telling him a story.

"Once there was a man who worked for a king. This man had asked the king for lots and lots of money. The man promised to pay it all back. One day the king told this man, 'Pay back all the money you borrowed from me. Pay me right now!' But this man did not have the money. He could not pay the king.

"The king called his servants and said, 'Sell everything this man has. I will take that money to pay what he owes me!'

"The man got down on his knees in front of the king. 'No! No!' he cried. 'Please wait! I promise to pay you back all the money I owe you!'

"The king felt sorry for the man. He said, 'Get up. I forgive you. You do not have to pay back any of the money you borrowed.'

"The man was very happy! On his way home from talking to the king, he saw a friend of his. This friend had borrowed a little money from him. The man grabbed his friend. He shouted, 'Give me back all my money!'

"The friend got down on his knees. He begged, 'Please wait. I promise to pay you back.' But the man would not forgive his friend. He had his friend put in jail!

"When the king heard about the unkind way that this man had treated his friend, the king called the man to come to him. 'You are a mean man!' the king said. 'I forgave you. I did not make you pay back ANY of the money you owed me! But you did not forgive your friend. You will be punished for your unkindness.' So the king had the man put into jail."

When Jesus finished the story, He said, "God wants you to ALWAYS forgive other people, even when they have been unkind to you."