

Five: Seventy Times Seven
Scripture: Matthew 18:20–23 (NIV)

“For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”
Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?”
Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”

Cast *(insert actors’ names)*

- **Ava** – A loyal and passionate friend whose sense of betrayal runs deep when trust is broken. She is strong-willed and protective of those she loves, especially her family. Her anger masks real hurt, and her struggle to forgive is at the heart of the story. Ava embodies the difficult, honest question: “How do you forgive when you still hurt?”
- **Zoe** – Once Ava’s closest friend, now desperate to make things right. She is impulsive and talks too freely, but her remorse is genuine and raw. Zoe represents the person who has truly messed up but refuses to walk away without trying to make amends, even knowing she may not be forgiven.
- **Malik** – The steady, thoughtful friend who cares deeply about restoring peace. He is calm and patient, often playing mediator without taking sides. Malik’s quiet wisdom and family story about forgiveness remind everyone that reconciliation is rarely easy, but it’s always worth attempting.
- **Julia** – The perceptive observer who quietly carries her own history of betrayal and forgiveness. She’s empathetic, grounded, and able to see both sides without judgment. Julia’s willingness to share her own scars helps Ava see forgiveness as freedom rather than forgetting, making her an unexpected guide in Ava’s journey.
- **Pastor Lisa** – A compassionate, clear-eyed pastor who doesn’t sugarcoat the challenge of forgiveness. She sees the pain in her students and speaks with the authority of experience, offering gentle spiritual truth. Lisa’s closing words give permission for forgiveness to be a process, not a single act.

Synopsis:

When Ava learns Zoe has shared a painful secret, their friendship seems broken. Though Zoe apologizes repeatedly, Ava’s anger holds tight. Malik shares a family story about forgiveness—not as instant healing, but as the first brave step. Julia, an unexpected ally, offers a perspective from her own past. By the end, Ava doesn’t fully forgive, but she dares to begin.

Scene 1—The Betrayal

Church classroom, Saturday morning. Ava confronts Zoe after discovering she shared confidential information about Ava’s brother’s legal trouble, turning private pain into gossip. Though the charges will be cleared, Ava is humiliated and furious that the trust between them

has been so deeply broken. Their argument is raw and emotional, ending with both girls storming out, certain their friendship is over.

Scene 2 – The Conversation with Malik

Church hallway, one week later. Malik approaches Ava gently, encouraging her to consider reconciling with Zoe. He doesn’t know all the details, but he knows how much the friendship once meant. Ava misreads his plea as he takes Zoe’s side and lashes out at him. Despite being hurt by her words, Malik insists that real friendship can survive hard things, planting a seed Ava isn’t ready to accept yet.

Scene 3 – The Turn

Same church classroom, shortly after. Julia finds Ava alone, crying. In a quiet, vulnerable exchange, Julia shares her own experience of being betrayed and the slow, painful path to forgiveness. She reframes forgiveness not as forgetting or excusing, but as releasing anger to reclaim peace. Ava listens, defensive at first, but begins to soften, seeing Julia’s courage and realizing forgiveness might free her too.

Scene 4 – The Door Ajar

Setting: Church classroom, one week later.
Ava sits with Malik and Julia in tense but more open conversation. She’s no longer consumed by anger, but she’s deeply unsure about what to do next. Their gentle banter eases the mood while offering nonjudgmental support. When Zoe unexpectedly enters, Malik and Julia quietly slip out, leaving the two former friends alone to face what’s been left unsaid.

Scene 5 – Seventy Times Seven

Church classroom, a few minutes later. Zoe speaks from the heart, owning her mistake without making excuses. She doesn’t demand forgiveness but asks to be heard. Ava finally admits she’s tired of carrying her anger, though she can’t yet say the words “I forgive you.” Pastor Lisa joins them, offering a quiet reflection on Jesus’ teaching: forgiveness isn’t about forgetting the wrong but releasing the weight of it—seventy-seven times if needed. For the first time, Ava doesn’t turn away, and something fragile and hopeful begins.

Song: Seventy-Seven Times (*May be read responsively and/or play the song from the collection*)

Verse 1 (Leader)

Where two or three have gathered near,
The Lord is standing with us here.
No walls divide, no wounds too deep,
Where grace is sown, peace starts to keep.

Chorus (Audience)

Seventy-seven times we’ll forgive,
As mercy teaches us to live.
The heart grows light when we let go—
Of what we’re owed, of what we know.

Verse 2 (Leader)

Peter asked, “Shall seven be enough?”
But love responds when times are tough.
No count can hold what love will bear—
The cross was lifted, and we were spared.

Chorus (Audience)

Seventy-seven times we’ll forgive,
As mercy teaches us to live.
The heart grows light when we let go—
Of what we’re owed, of what we know.

Bridge (All)

The kingdom comes in broken things,
In humbled hearts, in offerings.
Forgiveness flows from those who’ve seen
How deep the Father's grace has been.

Final Chorus (All)

Seventy-seven times we’ll forgive,
As mercy teaches us to live.
For where we gather in His name,
Love stands beside us, still the same.

Reflection:

Forgiveness doesn’t erase the past. It doesn’t undo the pain or restore trust overnight. But it opens a door. In a world where we are often quick to condemn, this story reminds us that forgiveness is a practice of strength, not weakness—a decision to lay down anger so something new can begin. As Jesus said, we forgive not seven times, but seventy-seven—because love multiplies where grace is given room to grow.

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