

As We Forgive Others

Matthew 6:5-15

TAG Team Lesson

Week beginning June 20, 2010

When we pray for God's forgiveness, we are asking God to let us off the hook. Our request is that the burden of guilt resting on our shoulders would be lifted up and carried away. We want our relationship with the Father restored.

Receiving forgiveness is wonderful! Extending forgiveness is another matter. When we have been hurt, we want the one who hurt us to pay.

Complete the following excuses related to forgiveness from your experience or from what you have heard others say.

I will forgive her when....

I should forgive them but....

I might forgive him if....

Who from your past or present would you least want to meet today at the store or in an elevator? Why? The Lord's Prayer contains many requests, from a plea for God's will to be carried out to a prayer for daily food. The fifth request in the Lord's Prayer is for forgiveness. "Forgive us our debts," we pray, "as we also have forgiven our debtors." READ Matthew 6:5-15.

1. What memories or impressions come to mind as you read the Lord's Prayer – memories from childhood or from worship experiences involving the model prayer?

2. According to verses 5-8, what "games" do some people play with prayer?

3. What was Jesus trying to show us about our daily needs by incorporating a request for forgiveness in this teaching on prayer?

4. Some readers of the prayer have concluded that God's forgiveness is earned by our own forgiveness of others. Other readers believe that our forgiveness of other people is the evidence that God has forgiven us. Explain why you agree or disagree with each view.

5. If we refuse to forgive another person, what do Jesus' words force us to conclude about ourselves (vv. 14-15)?

6. What reasons have you used (or could you use) to resist forgiving another person?

7. How would you counsel another Christian who came to you with those same reasons for not forgiving someone else?

8. Should forgiveness excuse the other person from the consequences of their actions? Explain your answer.

9. The final requests in the model prayer are "lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one" (v. 13). What temptation from the evil one might we experience right after we pray for the courage to forgive someone?

10. Why does Jesus make forgiveness such a crucial issue for his followers?

11. What specific things can we as Christians do to demonstrate to our society that we are a forgiving community?

This lesson focuses on forgiveness extended to others – but what if *you* are the one who needs to be forgiven? Think through your past and present to see if there are situations where you have hurt someone else. Work out a plan, and go to the individuals you have wronged. Admit your sin, and ask for forgiveness. The process will require courage and humility, but God will bring blessing to you through it.