

FORGIVE US AS WE FORGIVE

Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

Individuals or groups may enjoy working through this content while having fellowship at home, while away on summer vacation, or in a Connect Group. We'll provide updated content from week to week this summer.

Our Father in heaven,

Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.

Amen.

SUMMARY

This section of the Lord's Prayer invites us to seek and extend forgiveness as an essential aspect of our relationship with God and others. We are exploring the themes of debt, forgiveness, and the transformative power of releasing resentment and guilt. These are crucial next steps after acknowledging our daily need for sustenance and God's provision. Forgiveness is not just a personal act but a communal and spiritual discipline that reflects God's grace and mercy. Forgiveness releases us from the burdens of guilt and vengeance, enabling us to live in freedom and peace. It also underscores the gospel's central message: the forgiveness of sins through Christ's sacrifice.

We exist to help connect **Jesus to people, people to community, and community to God's mission**. Here are a few insights about how The Lord's Prayer connects to our mission as a church. Let's discuss this text and the process of prayer.

JESUS TO PEOPLE

Praying "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" invites us to embrace the depth of Jesus' forgiveness and extend it to others. It calls us to reflect on our own need for forgiveness and to recognize that forgiving others is integral to our spiritual growth and witness. By connecting people to Jesus, we help them understand and experience the freedom and liberation that come from being forgiven and forgiving others. This petition reminds us that forgiveness is a fundamental aspect of the gospel, demonstrating God's love and grace in our lives.

...PEOPLE TO COMMUNITY...

Praying for forgiveness encourages us to build a community rooted in grace, mercy, and reconciliation. It compels us to let go of grudges, bitterness, and the desire for retribution, fostering a spirit of unity and peace. By embodying God's forgiveness, we create an environment where people can experience healing and restoration. As we practice forgiveness, we become agents of God's redemptive work, transforming relationships and communities through the power of His grace.

...COMMUNITY TO MISSION

Praying for forgiveness motivates us to participate in God's mission of reconciliation and redemption. The local church serves as an embassy of God's kingdom, demonstrating His forgiveness and love to the world. We are called to live out the values of God's kingdom, showing the world a different way of dealing with wrongs and injustices. By extending forgiveness, we draw attention to the radical nature of God's grace and invite others to experience the transformative power of the gospel. As we forgive, we participate in God's mission to heal and restore a broken world.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What is forgiveness, and how does it differ from simply forgetting or ignoring wrongs?
2. Why do you think Jesus emphasizes the need to forgive others in the Lord's Prayer?
3. How has unforgiveness affected your mental, emotional, and physical health? Can you share a personal experience where forgiveness brought healing?
4. What are some common misconceptions about forgiveness, and how can we address them in our own lives?
5. How can our church better reflect the spiritual realities of forgiveness and reconciliation? What steps can we take to foster a culture of grace and mercy?
6. Why is it challenging to forgive others, and how can we overcome these difficulties through faith and reliance on God's strength?
7. How can we develop a heart of forgiveness? What practices can help us cultivate a forgiving spirit, both individually and as a community?