

Prayer - Part Five
FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

Matthew 6:9–13 (NKJV)

⁹In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

¹⁰Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹Give us this day our daily bread.

¹²And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

¹³And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

- *Jesus gave us a pattern in Matthew, Chapter 6, of what prayer looks like and how it functions.*
- *What many call “The Lord’s Prayer” is not simply something one repeats, even though one could repeat it, but it provides us with seven essential qualities of prayer.*

- *Our Father* - *The intimacy that prayer is to produce.*
- *In Heaven* - *The worship that prayer is to produce.*
- *Hallowed be Your name.* - *The purity that prayer is to produce.*
- *Your Kingdom come.* - *The goal that prayer is to produce.*
- *Give us this day our daily bread.* - *The dependency that prayer is to produce.*

- *And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors – The spiritual inventory and right relationships that prayer produces.*
- *Up to the point when we pray “and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,” the Lord’s Prayer seems to flow seamlessly from thought to thought but then the conjunction “and” is introduced which is the Greek word “καί.”*
- *The Greek word “καί” not only can function as a connecting word, but also a marker of emphasis, involving surprise and even unexpectedness.*
- *The “and” in “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” not only breaks the flow of the prayer, but causes us to pause and gives us an opportunity to reflect and contemplate what we are actually praying and the consequences of this segment of the prayer.*
- *When we pray “and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” we are both acknowledging a principle by which God operates and actively agreeing with Him on that principle.*

Matthew 6:14–15 (NKJV)

¹⁴“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

¹⁵But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

- *These verses that directly follow the Lord's Prayer both expand upon "and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," and clearly explain the consequences that sin has on our relationship with our heavenly Father.*
- *The fact that this is the only part of the Lord's Prayer that is immediately repeated and explained in greater detail right after the Lord's Prayer emphasizes the great importance that this principle has on our lives.*
- *What does it mean, "If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses?"*
- *First, it shows that un-confessed and un-dealt with sin has serious consequences in our relationship with God and specifically the sin of un-forgiveness.*
- *When it says, "if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," it is not dealing with judicial forgiveness, but relational forgiveness.*
- *When we first came to Christ and put our faith in Him, confessed our sinful and lost state, He forgave us and we were born again and delivered from the penalty of sin which is eternal damnation in the lake of fire—this is judicial forgiveness.*
- *Salvation is much more than just going to Heaven, it is about developing our relationship with God and fulfilling His purposes for our lives.*
- *While judicial forgiveness deals with being in right standing through the blood of Jesus Christ, relational forgiveness deals with the quality of our relationship with our Father through our actions, words, and thoughts.*
- *It is clear from both Scripture and experience that even though every born again believer has the same righteous standing before God based on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the quality of that relationship with God can vary greatly from believer to believer, depending upon each person's level of commitment and consecration.*
- *How we develop our relationship with God on earth will affect the quality of our relationship with God not only in this earthly life, but also in Heaven for all eternity.*
- *Relational forgiveness speaks about being in harmony with the Father and with His purposes for our lives.*
- *Many Christians have a very narrow view of salvation and their only concern is that they are going to Heaven. But salvation is much richer, deeper, and more glorious than just getting to Heaven.*

- *When believers think of salvation only in terms of going to Heaven, it results in lives that are mediocre at best and filled with dissipation and destruction at worst.*

1 Corinthians 3:13–15 (NKJV)

¹³each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

¹⁴If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

¹⁵If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- *“each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it” – There will be a Day for each believer when we will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10), and it will become clear on that Day how we lived our lives.*
- *“The Day” referring to the Judgment Seat of Christ is not about judicial forgiveness and justification, because the moment we received Jesus Christ and were born again we passed from death to life. (John 5:24).*
- *At the Judgment Seat of Christ “each one's work will be tested of what sort it is” and how well we lived our lives. One of the biggest tests will be based on our relationship with God and our relationships with those around us.*
- *“If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward” – While justification (judicial forgiveness) deals with freedom from the penalty of sin; sanctification and right relationships deals with receiving rewards, crowns, and inheritances.*
- *“the fire will test each one's work” – In Hell there is a fire of condemnation which burns for all eternity, but at the Judgment Seat of Christ there is a fire of purification that is temporary for the purpose of removing anything in our lives and hearts that we have failed to remove during our earthly lives.*
- *The very concept of fire at the Judgment Seat of Christ emphasizes the severity and the gravity of the judgment each believer will experience.*
- *“If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss” – For some, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, they will experience great sorrow and regret as they face the reality of their irreparable and eternal loss, because they resisted the grace of God in their lives.*
- *“If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward” – Some believers will find the experience of the Judgment Seat of Christ filled with great joy and glory as the fire reveals the breathtaking and magnificent things that the grace of God accomplished in them and through them, as they gaze upon all the rewards, crowns, and inheritances that God is going to impart to them.*

- “If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire” - *The fire at the Judgment Seat of Christ is not for condemnation and every born again believer will pass through it into Heaven but some with the terrible experience of eternal loss.*

Revelation 7:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.”

- *For those believers at the Judgment Seat of Christ that have experienced the realization they have wasted their entire lives, Jesus will wipe away their tears, but not their losses.*
- *In Heaven there will not be tears or regrets, however, depending on how we developed our relationship with God in this life will determine the level of intimacy and glory we will experience with the Lord in Heaven.*
- *Some Christians will have developed such a deep and intimate relationship with God that they will even sit with Him on His throne forever! (Revelation 3:21).*
- *When we pray, “and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors”, the “and” is meant to be a pause in our prayer to consider the condition of our hearts and specifically in regards to our relationship with others.*
- *Three things to evaluate your life by:*
- *The reality of your mortality*
- *The return of Christ*
- *The fear of the Lord*
- *Many Christians fail to understand the implications of, “and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” and live self-centered lives void of an eternal perspective.*

Mark 11:25 (NKJV)

²⁵“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

- *“And whenever you stand praying...forgive” – Prayer is one of the ways the Holy Spirit speaks to us concerning unresolved issues of our heart. It is often during prayer that we recognize those things and confess them, repent of them, and receive forgiveness for them.*

Matthew 5:23–24 (NKJV)

²³Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,

²⁴leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

- “Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you” – *As we pray “and forgive us ...” it gives us an opportunity to allow the Holy Spirit to search our hearts for any broken relationships that have not been dealt with.*
- “First be reconciled to your brother” – *When we know someone is offended by us, we need to go and make peace with them.*
- *It doesn’t always mean we have done something purposefully or in reality wrong to that person, but if it is something that is stumbling them, then we need to do our best to reconcile that relationship.*

Romans 12:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸**If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.**

- “live peaceably with all men” – *God is calling us to have peaceable relationships with everyone in our sphere of influence.*
- “If it is possible, as much as depends on you” – *However, God is not placing on our shoulders the full responsibility to have peaceable relationships. He is only asking us to do our part.*
- *If someone does not want to be at peace with us or to have a good relationship with us then we are not bound or hindered by their hardness of heart as long as we have done our part to reach out to them.*
- *Harmony with people requires both parties, but to have a right attitude in our hearts only requires ourselves.*

Matthew 5:43–45 (NKJV)

⁴³**“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’**

⁴⁴**But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,**

⁴⁵**that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.**

- “love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you” - *The Word of God speaks about not only forgiving those who have wronged us and asking for forgiveness to those whom we have wronged, but even forgiving those who not only do not seek forgiveness from us, but continue to seek to harm us.*
- *We are to have a heart of love towards all people, just as God loves all people independent of their action, words, and motivation.*

- *“that you may be sons of your Father in heaven” – As we co-operate with the grace of God so His heart of love can be formed in us, our relationship with God blossoms.*
- *Since God commands us to love our enemies, there is one thing that is essential for us to be able to fulfill this commandment—enemies.*
- *The world provides us with many enemies and God uses the very tactics of Satan to do such a work in our hearts that the glory of God can be manifested.*
- *It is in the midst of adversities that many times God wants to do a work in our hearts if we do not resist, but respond with love and forgiveness.*
- *“God didn’t want me to change my job he wanted me to change my attitude.”*
- *Some of the greatest enemies of the gospel of Jesus Christ have been transformed by the love of God expressed through Christians.*
- *Apostle Paul is one example of a man, who before his conversion, was not only an enemy of the Gospel, but one committed to the destruction of the Church. Through the love of Christ, Paul ended up giving his life for the Church.*
- *Forgiveness does not necessarily mean that God requires us to naively trust everyone. In fact, the Bible instructs us as to “be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” (Matthew 10:16).*
- *Forgiveness is something that we must give out freely and generously to all around us without exception, but trust and friendship must be developed, cultivated, and proven over time.*
- *God is not asking us to expose ourselves to abusive or dangerous people, but simply have a heart of love and forgiveness toward those people.*
- *Forgiveness does not mean we simply ignore their bad or dangerous behaviour but that we chose to forgive them.*
- *Forgiveness does not equate to trust. God asks us to forgive unconditionally all those who have wronged us, even our enemies and those who do not seek forgiveness. He does not say we should be naïve and blindly trust them.*
- *While King Saul sought to kill David, David continued to forgive, bless, and honour King Saul but he also maintained a safe distance from him by fleeing into the wilderness of Judah.*

1 Peter 3:7 (NKJV)

⁷Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

- *Bitterness and unresolved conflicts, especially between husbands and wives, can hinder our prayer. As much as possible, God is calling us to restore broken relationships.*

- *If we are doing as much as we can to live peaceably with all people, then our prayers and relationship with God will not be hindered.*

Psalm 51:12 (NKJV)

¹²Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, And uphold me by Your generous Spirit.

- *One of the signs of a believer who walks in forgiveness and is free from bitterness is that he or she is filled with the joy of salvation.*
- *A believe who is plagued by bitterness will never enjoy their salvation and lacks the joy of the Lord.*
- *“And uphold me by Your generous Spirit” – One way to be upheld by God’s generous Spirit is to generously and freely forgive all those who wrong us, even when they are not expecting or even asking for forgiveness.*

Romans 14:15–17 (NKJV)

¹⁵Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.

¹⁶Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil;

¹⁷for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

- *“if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love” – The Bible teaches us not to do anything that could stumble or offend a fellow believer.*
- *The Gospel is about righteousness, peace, and joy.*
- *Righteousness can speak about right relationships.*
- *Peace can speak about a heart that is free from offences and unforgiveness.*
- *Joy can speak about the overflow of a life freely connected to God’s grace.*
- *When we pray, “and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” we acknowledge that our relationship with others affects our relationship with our Father in Heaven.*
- *Our relationship with God affects our relationship with others.*
- *A healthy relationship with God paves the way for us to be able to love, accept, and forgive those around us.*
- *Our relationship with others affects our relationship with God.*
- *When we neglect to cultivate healthy relationships with others it will affect our relationship with God. Unresolved issues in our heart toward others hinder our ability to experience God’s love, peace, and joy.*

Matthew 22:36–40 (NKJV)

³⁶“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”

³⁷Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

³⁸This is the first and great commandment.

³⁹And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

- “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” – *One of the religious leaders asked Jesus to summarize the heart of God’s Word.*
- *Maybe he expected Jesus to respond regarding keeping the Sabbath, the dietary laws, or one of the seven feasts of the Lord, but His response was about relationships and the Law of love.*
- *The Gospel of Jesus Christ is all about right relationships, first between God and us, and second between our fellow man and us.*
- “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” – *Unless we allow the grace of God to transform us so we fully love God we will find our spiritual lives will come to a dead end.*
- “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” – *A consequence of us loving God fully is that we begin to love others unselfishly.*
- *Religion is about activity, but righteousness is about relationships.*
- *A person can be very religious and harbor resentment and unforgiveness. Religion is about outward activity, in fact, religious people can sometimes exude bitterness and be extremely judgmental and critical since religion has nothing to do with relationships.*
- *Since the Gospel is all about relationships everything we do should be about cultivating healthy and loving relationships and that is why we pray, “and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.”*
- *“The teachings of the Sermon on the Mount is – Never look for justice, but never cease to live it.” Oswald Chambers*
- *If we look for justice we will become bitter, disillusioned, and vindictive.*
- *If we seek to live out justice we will be forgiving and loving knowing that Jesus Christ has already paid the full price for our sins and He desires to save every man, woman, and child.*
- *We extend mercy and forgiveness to those that are erring not to excuse their behavior, but to help them change their behaviour.*
- *“People don’t usually express their feelings as jealousy; instead they look for faults in the other person to justify their ugly feelings.” Harvey Katz*
- *When we are unhappy about our lives we tend to be angry and judgmental toward others.*

Romans 2:1 (NKJV)

¹Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

- “for you who judge practice the same things” – *This spiritual principle is a good way of gauging the condition of our own hearts.*
- *The very things that bother us about someone else are the very things we are struggling with and guilty of doing.*
- *An example of how this principle works: Proud people can’t stand arrogant people while humble people are not bothered by arrogance.*
- *The consequences of holding onto resentment and refusing to forgive is that we lose something very precious in regards to God’s plan of salvation for our lives. We lose the redemptive work God wants to do in our lives today.*
- *Some Christians have lost months, years, and even decades of their lives, because they refused to forgive and release those who have either wronged them or whom they have perceived to have wronged them.*
- *Forgiveness is not a feeling but a choice and is really a step of faith and obedience.*
- *When we as believers choose to forgive someone, even if they do not seek forgiveness, we have made a very important declaration of faith. We have recognized the forgiveness that God extended to us through the death of His Son as so much greater than the small injustices we experience through the transgressions of a fellow man.*
- *When we choose to forgive someone for the sake of Jesus Christ then we are actively acknowledging not only how much we have been forgiven, but how thankful and appreciative we are to God for Jesus’ sacrifice for us.*
- *The old adage, “If something cost nothing, it is worth nothing” is seen in Christians who are unwilling to obey and live self-sacrificing lives for the One who died for them. They place little value on the forgiveness and salvation they received through Christ’s sacrifice for them.*
- *To live a life of forgiveness and self-sacrifice for the sake of the gospel will lead to a life of freedom, fruitfulness, and fulfillment.*
- *When a person in bondage begins to say or do things to you in order to make you angry or resentful, you have two possible responses: You can either forgive them or allow their resentment to infect you.*
- *The person is already in the prison of resentment and bitterness and he wants you to join him there, but when you freely forgive him, then you are free from the entanglement of bitterness.*
- *Forgiveness disarms the ugliness of vindication.*

- *One way to destroy our witness for Jesus Christ is to be unforgiving and vindictive. Jesus taught, “By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35).*
- *One of Jesus’ greatest examples of love and forgiveness is seen on the cross. In the face of pure hatred he spoke words of pure love “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”*
- *When we as believers pray, “and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,” it is an acknowledgement that unconfessed sins, resentment, and unforgiveness is destructive to our lives. If we do not deal with unforgiveness we will still go to Heaven, but something very precious of God’s plan of salvation for our lives will be eternally lost.*