

Lead Us Not Into Temptation

Matthew 6:9-13 (NKJV)

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

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

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

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

13 And 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.

- *Of all of the components of the “Lord’s Prayer” that Jesus taught His disciples, the only one that really stands out as being incongruent with the character of God is found in verse 13, “and do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.”*
- *I believe the key to understanding Matthew 6:13 is found in the verse just preceding it and the verses directly following it.*

Matthew 6:12 (NKJV)

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

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.

- *Both verses deal with the issue of forgiveness!*

Matthew 6:12 (NKJV)

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

- *Matthew 6:12 is not dealing so much with sin as it is dealing with how sin affects relationships.*
- *The Greek word for “debt” is ὀφείλημα *opheilēma* and it means, “the arrears owed to a creditor; the moral debt incurred as the result of sin.”*
- *Therefore the idea of debt deals more with the consequence of sin and its effect on relationships than the actual act itself.*
- *However, Matthew 6:12 does not address the perpetrator of the sin but the victim of the sin.*
- *The vicious cycle of sin begins when the victim becomes ensnared by the wounds incurred.*

- *Matthew 6:12 explains how the cycle of sin is passed on from generation to generation.*
- *“And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors” – To the same measure that we release those that have wronged us, we are released from the wrongs we have committed before God.*
- *We can understand why this world is filled more and more with hatred, wars and sin.*
- *This world is filled with people who are seeking vindication, revenge and retribution and all it produces is more hatred and violence.*

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.

- *The Greek word for trespasses is παράπτωμα *paraptōma* and it means, “to stumble, to go astray, to be mistaken, to transgress.”*
- *Debt deals with the moral cost of sin while transgression deals with the actually act of the sin itself.*
- *The dominating fact in all these verses is that sin damages relationships and the most important relationship it damages is our relationship with God.*
- *The most striking point in these verses is that it is not dealing with the person who acted in a sinful or harmful way but the one who has incurred hurt or loss because of sin.*
- *The way that we as believers deal with those that have wronged us has a direct effect upon our relationship with God.*
- *This principle is not about salvation (justification) but the quality of our relationship with God and the ensuing quality and fruitfulness of our lives.*

Mark 11:25 (Amplified)

And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him and let it drop (leave it, let it go), in order that your Father Who is in Heaven may also forgive you your (own) failings and shortcomings and let them drop.

- *This translation beautifully illustrates how we are to deal with an offence or a hurt – “forgive, let it drop, leave it alone, let it go”*

- *We can see that the “do not lead us into temptation” in Matthew 6:13 is related directed to our attitude towards those that have hurt us, wronged us, or betrayed us.*
- *A parable found in Matthew 18 helps to bring clarity to the relationship between forgiveness and temptation.*

Matthew 18:23–35 (NKJV)

²³Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

²⁴And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

²⁵But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made.

²⁶The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’

²⁷Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

²⁸“But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’

²⁹So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’

³⁰And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.

³¹So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.

³²Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.

³³Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’

³⁴And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

³⁵“So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

Matthew 18:23–35 (NKJV)

²³Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.

- *“The kingdom of heaven” – This parable, for the most part, is not dealing with unbelievers but with Christians and how the economy of God works in His kingdom.*

- “a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants” – *This parable also deals with the relationship between a king and his servant thus paralleling the relationship between God and man.*
- “who wanted to settle accounts with his servants” – *God wants to settle accounts, for His desire is to be reconciled to man and thus He instigated a crisis where the servant realized that he owed a great debt to the king which he was unable to pay.*
- *This first part of the parable can illustrate the crisis that arises that brings us to Christ to receive salvation and the forgiveness of our sins.*

²⁴And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

- *The Greek word for “Owe him” is ὀφειλέτης *opheiletēs* and it is a noun meaning “debtor” and it comes from the same word used in Matthew 6:12 translated as “debt”.*
- “he had begun to settle accounts” – *Each debtor is brought before the king and each debt is carefully presented and tabulated until the full impact of the indebtedness is revealed.*
- “one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents” – *A talent of silver was equal to about 6000 days of wages and therefore 10,000 talents would be equal to about 165,000 years of wages.*

²⁵But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made.

- *The impossibility of the servant being able to pay the debt would result in an endless loss of all things without the possibility of redemption – this can be one description of Hell.*

²⁶The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’

- *The servant overwhelmed by his fate begged for patience to try to pay a debt that he would never in fact never be able to pay.*
- *The first step to receive Christ as Saviour is to grasp the immensity of our sinfulness and our hopeless state.*

²⁷Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt.

- *The Greek word for “moved with compassion” is σπλαγχνίζομαι *splanchnizomai* and it means, “to feel compassion for, to have great affection for, love” and it reveals the true heart of the king for his servants.*
- *The generosity of the king is seen in two ways:*
- *Firstly, the king set the servant free from the bondage of the fear of judgement and released him from the debt.*
- *Secondly, the king, by forgiving the debt, ended up incurring and absorbing the loss himself.*

Colossians 1:20 (NKJV)

20 and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

- *For God to reconcile the world to Himself, He had to absorb the loss Himself and thus Christ died so that the righteous requirements of the Law which required justice could be met.*
- *The relationship between the king and his servant had been reconciled and no longer did the servant have to experience fear or shame in the presence of the king because of the great debt that he owed.*

²⁸“But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’

- *“But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants” – This same servant after he had been forgiven, made a conscious and deliberate effort to seek out a fellow servant that was indebted to him.*
- *“Who owed him a hundred denarii” – This is about 100 days wages which pales in comparison to the 165,000 years of wages that the first servant was forgiven.*
- *“he laid hands on him and took him by the throat” – We see that the first servant, while not just seeking payment, was filled with a rage and a desire to harm if not to kill.*

²⁹So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’

- *Here was an opportunity for the first servant to extend even a small amount of the compassion and mercy that had been extended to him by the king.*

³⁰And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt.

- “And he would not” – *The Greek word for “would” is θέλω thelō and it means, “to wish to have, to will, to desire, to enjoy” and can refer to an act of the will.*
- *The act of forgiveness is not something that takes place in the emotions but is an act of the will.*
- *In this case the first servant chose not to show compassion but chose to act in a vindictive and vengeful way*
- *The first servant not only chose not to forgive the debt but to torment his fellow servant.*
- *When we choose not to forgive it is more than not wanting to restore a relationship. There is a lack of compassion and love for the other person.*
- *When the first servant threw his fellow servant into prison it made it impossible for the second servant to ever pay off his debt.*
- *Unforgiveness closes the door for reconciliation and thus is a form of inflicting perpetual punishment on the offending party.*

³¹So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done.

- *The first servant’s unwillingness to forgive resulted in the news getting back to the king.*
- *If the first servant had been compassionate then the news would have also reached the king’s ears.*
- *Our actions can either bring joy or grief to the heart of our God.*
- *It is an awesome responsibility when we realise that God loves us so much that our choices can either rejoice His heart or bring grief.*
- *The first servant was fearful when he appeared before the king the first time but once he was forgiven he left the king’s presence but without a deep respect and gratitude in his heart.*

³²Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me.

- *“You wicked servant” – When we as Christians are unforgiving we are acting wickedly because God has extend His infinite mercy and love to us so that we can do the same for our fellow human beings.*
- *Considering what an amazing gift of forgiveness we’ve been given, it’s surprising how few people extend that same gift to others.*
- *The actions of a servant will reflect how others will see the character of his master.*

Romans 2:24 (NKJV)

²⁴For “the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,” as it is written.

- *The poor actions of some Christians have caused the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be shamed in the eyes of the world.*

³³Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’

- *Christ is our example of how we should live and how we should treat other people.*
- *Just as God was compassionate and merciful to us we must be merciful and compassionate to each person we encounter regardless of what they have done to us.*

³⁴And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

- *“And his master was angry” – When we wilfully sin and knowingly choose not to forgive someone this causes God to become angry. This does not mean God does not love us but it does mean that He will employ very strong measures if necessary to bring us to repentance.*
- *The king “delivered him to the torturers” – Because the first servant chose not to forgive his fellow servant the king did not torture him but delivered him over to the ones who would imprison him and torture him.*
- *The Greek word for “torturer” can mean, “a person serving as a guard in a prison, whose function was to torture prisoners as a phase of judicial examination”, in other words to torture in order to extract truth.*
- *The king’s motivation was not to destroy his servant but to see him change for the better, but that could only happen if he would be willing to acknowledge the truth and turn back from his wicked ways of unforgiveness.*

- *What was the truth? That he had withheld compassion and mercy from a fellow servant even though he had been extended a much great measure of forgiveness and mercy.*
- *Two of the great enemies of the Christian life are unforgiveness and self-righteousness and the first servant had succumbed to both.*
- *“until he should pay all that was due to him” - This phrase bring up a number of important points.*
 - 1) *The debt that he now owed could be paid. The original debt that had been forgiven was still forgiven but this was a new debt. The original debt had an eternal consequence associated with it.*
 - 2) *The debt that now owed was not related to the original debt but had been incurred after the servant’s original debt was forgiven. This new debt is related to the fact that the servant refused to be merciful and forgiving to a fellow servant and to extend the same mercy that the king had extended to him.*
 - 3) *This second debt could be paid and the servant’s release would result.*
 - 4) *As long as the servant refused to pay the debt he would be in a prison and in the hands of the torturers.*
 - 5) *The payment that would ensure the servant’s release was for him to confess the truth that he had sinned by not forgiving his fellow servant and then choosing to forgive his fellow servant and releasing him from the prison that he had placed him in.*

³⁵“So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

- *At the end of the parable Jesus makes it clear that if we do not forgive from our hearts those that have sinned against us then our heavenly Father will hand us over to the tormentors until we confess the truth and forgive those that have wronged us.*

James 1:20 (NKJV)

²⁰for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.

- *Man’s anger is destructive and does not produce righteousness but God’s anger is directed towards the sin in our lives and He will do what is necessary for us to repent and to be set free.*

- *Now returning back to Matthew 6:13*
- “And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.”
- *This verse is in the context of forgiving those that have wronged us.*
 - *If we will not forgive those that have wronged us then our Heavenly Father will lead us into temptation and even deliver us to the evil one until we have learned to forgive from the heart.*
 - *When we harbour unforgiveness then we will find ourselves in a place of torment but all we must do is cry out to God and confess our sins of unforgiveness and forgive those that have wronged us and we will be released and delivered from the evil one.*
 - *Forgiving someone from the heart doesn't mean with our emotions but it is an act of our will.*
 - *Forgiveness is a choice not a feeling.*
 - *Forgiveness is acknowledging God's mercy and grace He has poured out upon us and be willing to pour out the same mercy and grace upon those that have wronged us.*
 - *Forgiveness is not reconciliation but it is the first step on the path of reconciliation.*
 - *We must forgive even our enemies and those who do not even acknowledge the wrong they have done to us. But until someone acknowledges the wrong the process of reconciliation cannot take place.*
 - *Forgiveness does not require the other person acknowledging that they have wronged us.*
 - *Reconciliation can only happen when the offending party acknowledges their failures and are willing to rebuild the relationship.*
 - *We must recognize God's sovereignty for us to truly be able to forgive from the heart.*
 - *We must recognize that whatever God has allowed in our lives can be redeemed if we will acknowledge God's sovereignty and allow His grace to flow through us to bring redemption to even very painful experiences.*

- *The key for us to be able to walk in forgiveness is to be filled with appreciation and love for the Lord and always acknowledge how wonderful it is that He has forgiven and saved us.*
- *The question is not if God is sovereign but how He is sovereign.*
- *God is sovereign through the death of Jesus Christ and His resurrection.*

Matthew 28:18 (NKJV)

¹⁸And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.

- *Through Christ’s death and resurrection all authority was given to Christ so that He is sovereign and we as believers need to choose to live in the reality of His sovereignty.*
- *We can forgive every person in the world no matter what they have done not based on our sentiments but knowing that Jesus died for all the sins of mankind.*
- *If that person does not eventually take hold of God’s forgiveness and receive Christ as Saviour he will experience eternal separation in Hell but that is between him and God.*
- *Forgiveness does not make things all better but it makes us all better.*

2 Corinthians 5:18–21 (NKJV)

¹⁸Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation,

¹⁹that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

²⁰Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God.

²¹For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- *God has called us to be His ambassadors to this world so that they may be reconciled to Him.*
- *Our ministry is one of reconciliation but if we cannot even forgive those that have wronged us how can we be God’s ambassadors to call the world to be reconciled to Him through Jesus Christ.*

²¹For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

- *This verse is the most perfect example of reconciliation because reconciliation means to make an equal exchange.*
- *Christ took all our sins and gave us all His righteousness and God the Father called it equal and thus reconciled us to Himself.*
- *How do we bring about reconciliation?*
- *We accept all the wrong people have done to us and we give them forgiveness and call it an equal trade.*
- *We need to unconditionally forgive all those who have hurt us however that does not mean we must blindly trust them.*
- *Acceptance, honour and love are to be unconditional.*
- *Trust is earned.*
- *Some are here who have never received Christ as Saviour and Lord and are separated from God because of their sins. Today is an opportunity to come to God and ask for His mercy and forgiveness to be extended to you.*
- *Some are here who have received Christ as Lord and Saviour but are struggling to forgive those who have hurt them. Today we can make a choice to continue to forgive them no matter how we may feel.*
- *Some are here who have experienced the joy of forgiving those that have wronged them and we can thank the Lord for that and ask Him to continue to give us **strength to walk in forgiveness.***