

## Prayer - Part Six

### AND DO NOT LEAD US INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM THE EVIL ONE

Matthew 6:9–13 (NKJV)

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

<sup>10</sup>Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.

<sup>11</sup>Give us this day our daily bread.

<sup>12</sup>And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.

<sup>13</sup>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.

- *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.*
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| • <i>Our Father</i>                        | - <i>The intimacy that prayer is to produce.</i>   |
| • <i>In Heaven</i>                         | - <i>The worship that prayer is to produce.</i>    |
| • <i>Hallowed be Your name.</i>            | - <i>The purity that prayer is to produce.</i>     |
| • <i>Your Kingdom come.</i>                | - <i>The goal that prayer is to produce.</i>       |
| • <i>Give us this day our daily bread.</i> | - <i>The dependency that prayer is to produce.</i> |
- *And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors – The spiritual inventory and right relationships that prayer is to produce.*
- *And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one – The divine guidance and divine protection that prayer is to produce.*
- *“And do not lead us into temptation” is worded in a very puzzling way.*
- *By praying “and do not lead us into temptation” it clearly implies that God may lead us into temptation.*
- *It might be equivalent to a child saying to his father, “Dad, don’t take me to a bad or an awful place.”*

- *On the surface it may appear more appropriate to pray, “Lead me into a place free from temptation and hardships” instead of praying, “don’t lead me into a place where I can be ensnared with temptation.”*
- *“And do not lead us into temptation” appears to stand in stark contrast to the opening of the Lord’s Prayer, “Our Father,” clearly stating that God is our loving and faithful Father who protects and does the very best for us.*

**Matthew 7:9–11 (NKJV)**

<sup>9</sup>Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone?

<sup>10</sup>Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent?

<sup>11</sup>If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

- *If the evil fathers of this world give good gifts to their children how much more can we expect good and wonderful gifts from our Heavenly Father?*
- *Jesus clearly taught that our Heavenly Father is good and gives good things to His children.*
- *Why then did Jesus teach us to pray, “and do not lead us into temptation”?*
- *This type of prayer may lead some to think, “Can we trust God’s guidance and good intentions for our lives?”*
- *However, for us to understand why we pray, “and lead us not into temptation,” we need to read it in the context of the Lord’s Prayer.*
- *The first thing we must remember as we examine, “and lead us not into temptation,” is that God is loving and good, His ways are perfect, and we can fully trust Him.*
- *Without this foundational truth of God’s goodness and love, we can easily distort the Word of God and His character.*
- *The second thing we must understand is the context of this portion of the prayer.*

- *Directly preceding “and lead us not into temptation” is “and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.”*
- *This is the second time and the only other time that the conjunction “and” appears in the Lord’s Prayer. As we saw last time, it is the Greek word “καί” which can be a connective word, but it can also be a marker of emphasis, involving surprise and even unexpectedness.*
- *The “and” breaks the flow of the Lord’s Prayer, but it also signifies that the two ideas of “and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors” and “and lead us not into temptation” are interconnected.*
- *The connection between these two aspects of the Lord’s Prayer is an important key in understanding why we pray, “and lead us not into temptation.”*
- *There is a parable that Jesus taught in Matthew, Chapter 18, which will provide clarity between forgiving others and not being led into temptation.*
- *A parable is a story about a natural event that illustrates a spiritual truth.*

#### **Matthew 18:21–22 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup>Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

<sup>22</sup>Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

- *The parable that Jesus is about to give is introduced by a question that Peter poses, “how often shall I forgive my brother?”*
- *Peter, being of a generous sort, provides what he thinks is a very noble and charitable answer, “seven times.”*
- *However, Jesus’ response is both shocking and challenging, “seventy times seven,” in other words, no matter how many times someone sins against us or how badly they hurt us, it is our obligation as followers of Jesus to forgive that person unconditionally and repeatedly.*
- *When Jesus gave a similar answer to the question of forgiveness in Luke, Chapter 17, the disciples blurted out their respond, “Increase our faith.” (Luke 17:5).*

- *The idea of forgiving everyone no matter what they have done to us and how many times they have wronged us, is so over the top they asked for more faith to be able to accept and act upon Jesus' words.*
- *It requires real faith to truly forgive someone. The act of true forgiveness incorporates within it faith that there is the potential that the person can be changed by the grace of God. It also incorporates the possibility that the person will never repent and will continue to hurt us. Forgiveness changes us, not the one who wronged us.*
- *It is up to the person to submit to the Holy Spirit to change them, but we must believe that the Holy Spirit can save and transform everyone no matter how wicked or depraved they are.*
- *In Matthew 18:23-35, Jesus continued on the topic of forgiveness with a parable that clearly shows why it is essential that we forgive everyone unconditionally.*

#### **Matthew 18:23–35 (NKJV)**

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

- *The parable begins with an insight into the heart of God; there was “a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants.”*
- *God's motivation is not to find a reason to condemn people. He is motivated by love to bring them to a place where they can settle their accounts with Him so that they can be saved, and enter into a relationship with Him that is free from fear and shame.*
- *God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to die in our place so that our outstanding accounts with Him, because of our sins and transgressions, could be settled once and for all and that we would not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16).*

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

<sup>25</sup>But 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.

- **“one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents” - *The first step for us to be reconciled with God and have our accounts settled is for us to recognize the enormity of our sins and transgressions.***
- **“But as he was not able to pay” - *A talent of silver is equivalent to about 6000 days of wages and therefore 10,000 talents of silver is equivalent to about 165,000 years of wages assuming we also worked weekends and didn’t take any statutory holidays.***
- ***For the servant to have incurred such an enormous debt meant he must have done something horrendous that caused his master to suffer an indescribable loss.***
- **“his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made” – *The next step in being reconciled with God is recognizing the eternal penalty we face as a result of our sins—the loss of all things and eternal suffering in the Lake of Fire.***
- ***It is impossible for us to pay the price to redeem our souls from the penalty of sin.***

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

- **“The servant therefore fell down before him” - *The third step to be reconciled to God is to humble ourselves before Him and cry out for mercy.***
- **‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ – *The servant was completely undone and had no idea how he could pay his debt, but he was grasping at straws in order to avert certain doom.***
- ***What the servant was proposing was absolutely absurd, but he did not know what else to do. His debt was beyond his ability to even grasp.***

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

- **“Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion” – *This reveals the true heart, character, and intentions of the king who was moved with***

*compassionate and desired to see his servant set free from the eternal consequences of his debt.*

- *The servant had no concept of how he could pay his debt and be freed from certain doom, but the king knew the way of salvation. When the servant cried out for mercy the king revealed it to him.*
- *“released him, and forgave him the debt” – So how could the servant be set free from the certain doom that awaited him?*
- *The king released the servant from his debt and forgave him by choosing to absorb the debt himself.*
- *The debt that the servant owed to his master was erased as the master absorbed the loss personally and the servant’s account with the master was settled and their relationship was restored.*
- *Christ died for us in order to pay for the debt that we owed so that we could be released and forgiven. “For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” (2 Corinthians 5:21).*
- *This is judicial forgiveness, justification, where we, as sinners, are once and for all forgiven and released from the penalty of sin, which is eternal damnation in the Lake of Fire.*
- *However, the parable does not end here unfortunately. It continues on to reveal something very sad and wicked regarding the servant who had just been forgiven.*

<sup>28</sup>“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!’

- *The forgiven servant deliberately sought a fellow servant who was indebted to him in order to extract payment.*
- *The second servant owed the first servant a hundred denarii which is equivalent to about 100 days wages which is not insignificant, but compared to what the first servant had just been forgiven it was trivial.*

- “He laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’” – *The first servant’s motivation was totally different then the king’s motivation. The king’s desire was to restore his relationship with his servant, while the servant’s desire was to bring vengeance upon his fellow servant and to make reconciliation impossible.*

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

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

- *The second servant humbled himself before the first servant and begged for mercy just as the first servant had done before his master. However, the first servant refused to extend any type of mercy or forgiveness and even denied him the opportunity to pay his debt.*

<sup>31</sup>So 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 actions did not portray the generosity of his master, but distorted the true nature of his master’s kingdom, which was one based on mercy and justice and not vengeance.*
- *When we as Christians are unforgiving and vindictive we are misrepresenting the character of our Saviour to those around us.*

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

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

- “just as I had pity on you” – *We can quickly forget how God extended his mercy and salvation to us and begin to act in arrogant and cruel ways toward those who have wronged us.*

<sup>34</sup>And 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” – *The master was angry with the unforgiving servant, but this does not mean he hated him, only that he was extremely grieved at his servant’s wicked actions.*

- *The master's anger was motivated by his love for both of his servants.*
- *The master loved the servant who had been wronged and was angry that he had been so mistreated and tormented by a fellow servant and thus his anger was aroused and he intervened.*

(Leonard Terry)

- *When we mistreat a fellow believer then our Heavenly Father reacts like any good father and is angry with the one who has done such a thing to one of His children, even if it is another one of His own children who has done it.*
- *Sometimes in our egocentric mind set we only think, "God loves me" and forget that He also loves the one we have hurt.*

(Leonard Terry)

- *The master also loved the unforgiving servant and his anger at his servant's unrighteous actions does not represent a lack of care. On the contrary, it showed that the master deeply cared for his servant and was motivated to see his servant come to a place of repentance and restoration.*
- *The master wanted the servant whom he had forgiven to become just like he was, generous and merciful.*
- *The master was grieved that the servant did not respond with thanksgiving for being forgiven, but instead was ungrateful, vengeful, and bitter.*
- **"He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly." - One of the most unloving things that a parent can do is to be indifferent toward a child who is disobedient, rebellious, and exhibiting destructive behaviours. (Proverbs 13:24).**
- *Our Heavenly Father chastens us "for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness" even though "no chastening seems to joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it." (Hebrews 12:10-11).*
- *Many times Christians, when speaking about God's love, mistakenly think it looks like permissiveness, when in fact it sometimes looks like discipline and even chastisement.*



- *Christians sometimes think of God not as their Father but as their grandfather who showers them with presents, but never with discipline.*

(Leonard Terry)

- *Back to Matthew 18:34*
- *“until he should pay all that was due to him” – The debt that the unforgiving servant now owed is a different debt than from the original one that he had been forgiven and released from.*
- *The first debt was limitless and would have resulted in eternal punishment. However, this second debt that the servant had now incurred was limited and once paid would result in the servant’s relationship being fully restored.*
- *As soon as the master released the first servant from the original debt it no longer could or would be counted against him since judicial forgiveness (justification) is permanent.*
- *Once we have received Christ we will no longer have to face God as the Judge who will condemn us, but now we relate to God as our Father who will chasten us if we walk in rebellion or encourage and bless us when we walk in obedience.*
- *The forgiveness of the first debt represents our justification – judicial forgiveness – freedom from the penalty of sin,*
- *The forgiveness of the second debt represents our sanctification – relational forgiveness – freedom from the power of sin.*
- *If we, as believers, walk in sin or rebellion God deals with us as His children and disciplines us so that we will repent and receive relational forgiveness which restores our relationship with both God and those around us.*
- *Once we have put our faith in Christ we have become children of God, so He doesn’t deal with us as a Judge but as a Father. We must remember that as a Father He will discipline and chastise us when we are disobedient.*

- **“Delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him” - *The actions that the master took is a key to understanding what it means when we pray “and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”***
- ***The master turned the unforgiving servant over to the torturers until he should pay the new debt that he had incurred.***
- ***The master now placed the unforgiving servant in prison thus allowing him to feel exactly what he had done to his fellow servant.***

(Leonard Terry)

- **“Delivered him to the torturers” - *The Greek word for “torturer” means, “a guard in a prison, whose function was to torture prisoners in order to extract the truth.”***
- ***The key for the unforgiving servant to be released from his prison of torment was to confess the truth that what he had done was totally wrong and that he had in fact wronged his fellow servant by withholding mercy from him, which he himself had received from his master.***
- ***If we’re held in a prison of unforgiveness, the key is always on the inside.***

(Shirley Howson)

- ***The king was still merciful and compassionate, but for the first servant to once again reap the benefits of the king’s mercy and compassion he had to confess his wrong doings, humble himself, and ask for the king’s forgiveness and mercy.***
- ***He also had to ask for forgiveness from the servant whom he been unwilling to forgive and release him from the prison that he had thrown him in.***
- ***Until the first servant released the second servant from his prison and debt, the first servant would remain in prison and in the hands of his tormentors.***

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

- ***Jesus concluded the parable by connecting the parable to the Father’s response when we as believers refuse to forgive someone from our heart.***

- *Jesus did not say forgive someone from your feelings, but simply choose wholeheartedly to forgive regardless of how you feel because forgiveness is not an emotional response but an act of the will.*
- *When we are struggling to forgive someone, just meditate upon how much God has forgiven us through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ and remember, “even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” (Colossians 3:13).*
- *If we as believers choose not to forgive someone or choose to walk in rebellion then God will deliver us over to the temptations that we have chosen and He will not deliver us from the sins we have embraced nor the Evil One who is behind those sinful behaviours.*
- *The story of the prodigal son gives us a clear example of how the principle of “and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one” works.*
- *If we follow this principle in the Lord’s Prayer we will experience God’s divine protection and guidance, but if we fail to follow this principle we will be led into temptation and a multitude of sorrows.*
- *Just as the parable in Mathew 18 provides us insights into how the principle of “and lead us not into temptation” operates in regards to unforgiveness, the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15 provides us insights into how the principle of “and lead us not into temptation” operates in regards to rebellion.*

#### **Luke 15:11–24 (NKJV)**

<sup>11</sup>Then He said: “A certain man had two sons.

<sup>12</sup>And the younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.’ So he divided to them his livelihood.

<sup>13</sup>And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

- *The rebellious younger son demanded his portion of his inheritance and “so the father divided to them his livelihood” and a few days later the son left and began to live a life of dissipation.*
- *One may ask, “Where was the father’s discipline for his younger son, because it appears the father simply complied with his son’s request and gave him his inheritance?”*

- *The very act of the father allowing his son to take his inheritance and to leave the protection of his home was the father's discipline.*

(Leonard Terry)

- *The father did not interfere with the son's decisions, but allowed him to walk right into the midst of temptations and the power of the devil to captivate him with many hurtful sins and lusts.*
- *Sometimes self-willed Christians say, "If it is not God's will for me to do this then He will have to stop me," but the truth is He will not stop you but will allow you to walk into very painful circumstances and to enter into temptations that he never intended for you to experience.*
- *If people choose to reject God, He will give them over to their uncleanness and vile passions to dishonour their own bodies among themselves. (Romans 1:24).*

<sup>14</sup>But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

<sup>15</sup>Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

<sup>16</sup>And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything.

- *"There arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want" – The outcome of the younger son's choices resulted in great hardship, distress, and loss.*
- *The father's discipline is seen in that he allowed his son to make painful and destructive choices and to reap the consequences of those choices.*
- *The father led him into temptation by allowing him the freedom to leave and to take his inheritance with him.*
- *The father did not deliver him from evil because he allowed his son to reap the painful consequences of his choices and did not stop those around his son to rob him of his possession and inheritance.*

<sup>17</sup>"But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!'

<sup>18</sup>I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you,

<sup>19</sup>and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.” ’

- “But when he came to himself” – *We see that the discipline that the son experienced through the painful consequences of his choices had a marvelous effect on his stubborn, proud, and rebellious attitudes.*
- “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son” - *The son began to realize how greatly he had sinned and how greatly he had shamed his father and rejected his father’s love and guidance.*

<sup>20</sup>“And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.

- *We see the real heart of the father as he waited patiently for his son to return and while his son was still a great way off he ran to him and embraced him and kissed him.*
- *The father may have had to wait months or even possibly years for his son to return, but the great love of the father is seen through his patience and longing for his son’s return.*

<sup>21</sup>And the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

<sup>22</sup>“But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.

<sup>23</sup>And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry;

<sup>24</sup>for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ And they began to be merry.

- *While we see the father’s great love he had for his son and the great celebration he made for his son there is one thing that the son had still lost.*
- *The son left with his inheritance but he has returned home empty handed, impoverished and filthy.*

- *Even though his relationship with his father had been restored the inheritance had not.*
- *The son not only had lost his inheritance through his sinful living, but the years of fellowship with his father he could have enjoyed and the opportunities he could have had to serve his father.*
- *The son now needed to begin to work and commit himself to rebuild and restore the inheritance that he had squandered.*
- *When we give into temptation it brings destruction to our lives and even though the moment we turn to our Heaven Father He completely receives us and forgives us, it will take time, humility, and submission to go through the process of restoration to gain back that which was lost and destroyed by our actions and choices.*

#### **1 Corinthians 10:13 (NKJV)**

**<sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.**

- *“but with the temptation will also make the way of escape” – God will never allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able to carry but He leads us away from temptation and provides the way of escape if we are willing to obey to His Word and look to Him.*
- *Sometimes Christians complain against God or make excuses that the temptation was irresistible and that God wasn’t there to provide the way of escape and that is why they fell into sin.*
- *However, if we are not attentive to His voice, but self-willed and rebellious, we will find ourselves being led deeper and deeper into temptation until it becomes irresistible, because we have failed to allow God to show us the way of escape.*
- *Another question that arises from, “And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one”, “if we pray for God’s divine guidance and protection then why do we still experience accidents, hardship, problems, or persecution?”*

- *When we pray for God's divine guidance and protection it does not mean things will always be easy or work out the way we would want, but it does mean that the enemy will not have the power to attack us randomly and that God will use every circumstance in our lives to bring glory to His name and victory and fruitfulness to our lives.*
- *What about two sports teams who are playing against one another and on both teams there are Christians who are praying that God will help them to win.*
- *During the American Civil War there were Christians on both sides that thought that God was on their side and were praying for God's help?*
- *What is the purpose of asking for divine guidance and favour if only one side can win?*

**Joshua 5:13–14 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup>And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?"

<sup>14</sup>So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"

- *Joshua, before he recognized the Angel of the Lord, he posed the question, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?"*
- *"No, but as Commander of the army of the LORD I have now come." – The answer came back clearly, "No." In other words, we are not to ask if God is on our side. We are to be on God's side.*
- *"And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and worshiped, and said to Him, "What does my Lord say to His servant?"" - Many Christians develop their plans and then ask God to bless those plans, but what we must do is ask God what His plan is and submit to what He says.*
- *When we pray, "And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one" we are saying that we desire to walk in God's ways with a pure heart and fully submit and obey Him so that He can guide our every foot step no matter where He leads.*

- *When we submit to Him we can be fully confident that He will protect us from every snare of the enemy so that our entire lives will be for His glory and His plans and purposes for our lives will be fulfilled.*
- *It is essential that we continually ask for God's divine guidance and protection but we must remember we must ask with a submissive heart that is free from unforgiveness, offense, rebellion or self-will.*