

# THE LORD'S PRAYER – MATTHEW 6:9-13

## AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE ALSO HAVE FORGIVEN OUR DEBTORS.

I hope you are enjoying this study on the Lord's prayer so far. It is amazing that awesome, mighty God, our Father in heaven, cares for us so much that, in this model of how to pray, he includes a section on asking for those things that we need, and also that the people around us need. But it's also so significant that the line comes after first magnifying and praising our wonderful God, and secondly after praying specifically for his kingdom and his will to come on this earth, as in heaven.

If we are following this model, we start our prayer by recognising our Father God, appreciating how we can come as his children, and praising that magnificent name that is above every other name. Then we might start praying for those people who don't know God, for his kingdom to come in their lives. We might start asking for God's will in our own lives, and then praying for the things that we need right now, according to the will of God. Within that moment, we acknowledge that we can trust him with our future, as we ask for the things we need today.

Then comes this next line:

*And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

Depending on the translation of your Bible, the words here might be different. I remember when I first learnt this prayer when I was a child it went, 'forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.' Some other translations use the word 'sin' instead, 'forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.'

What are your first thoughts when you read this line of the prayer?

Let's consider the first part first, the forgiveness of our debts, or our sins. What do we need forgiveness for? How do we know?

If we were forgiven once and for all, why do we need to keep praying this line?

The previous line talks about asking today for our daily bread, implying this model of prayer should be something we do every day. Is asking for forgiveness something that's a part of your regular prayer life?

What do you think the advantage would be of making this a regular part of our prayer lives? How do we make it become something positive rather than something that makes us feel guilty all the time?

Read 1 John 1:8-10

What do these verses tell us about sin?

Verse 9 talks about confessing our sin, and that if we do so, he will forgive us. Who should we confess our sins to? Just to God, or to each other?

Let's move on to this line of the prayer as a whole.

Do you find it easy to forgive people?

Let's consider a parable that Jesus taught. Read Matthew 18:21-35.

What does this parable tell us about forgiveness, and forgiving other people?

Can we be forgiven if we don't forgive other people? Read Matthew 6:14-15.

Is it ever okay not to forgive someone? What if a person is completely unrepentant about what they have done and repeats it again and again?

In those kinds of situations, does forgiving mean forgetting what the person has done?

What about forgiving ourselves? Is that easy to do?



As with most of the lines in this prayer, this one is plural as well. Forgive **us our** debts, as **we** have forgiven **our** debtors. Why do you think this is?

Jesus gave us the perfect example of following God's will; in the garden of Gethsemane, he was able to pray, 'Not my will but yours be done.' Likewise, he gives us such a good example of forgiveness. On the cross, with nails pierced through his hands and his feet, in unimaginable agony, this is what he said:

*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.*

Even in that moment of pain and suffering and rejection, Jesus was able to seek forgiveness for the people who had put him in that situation. Can we do the same?

I genuinely don't think this line of the prayer is included to make us feel guilty, to keep reminding us of everything we've done wrong, and those people who we haven't forgiven yet. But I do think it's just as important as every other line within the prayer. We need to be a people who continually come back to let Jesus wash our feet, and to be people who are forgiving to those around us.

This week, instead of a handout with verses to look through, you have a sheet to fill in. Take a bit of time and think, really think, is there anything in my life that I need forgiveness for? And is there anyone who I need to forgive? Write those things down, you don't need to share them with anyone if you don't want to, but bring them before God in prayer.

