

## "The Pardon of Prayer" - Part 6

*Matthew 6:12*

### Introduction

There is nothing worse when you have told a child repeatedly not to do something and they choose to ignore you. Not only do they ignore you, they proceed to do the very thing you advised them not to with a smile. This is an example of pure evil at its finest, to some an action worthy of the highest punishment, usually involving the proverbial leather rod of correction. Others may choose to demonstrate grace and overlook the matter, remembering that they too were once a child. But what happens when roles change and you have been wrongfully violated? If it is a spouse, church member, family, friend, or stranger, do you quickly forgive them? When you think about the deepest wounds you have experienced by others do you seek a fully restored relationship with that person? Or do you desire to get even? What about when it comes to your relationship with God? Is there a sin too great that He cannot forgive?

Despite our sins against God the Father, He sent Jesus as the greatest example of His love. Jesus is also the greatest example we have of God the Father's willingness to forgive our past, present, and future sins. Jesus helps us do the same in The Lord's prayer. In Matthew 6:12, Jesus says, "And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." A debt is something you owe. Here the emphasis is on accumulating a bill. In other words every time we sin, we ring up the cash register in Heaven. When we talk about the word forgive, it means to hurl away. Forgiveness is the decision to no longer credit the offense that the person has done to God or to you. It is like having a big number on a calculator and choosing to zero it out. For those of you who have trusted Christ as your Savior, your sins which deserved the eternal wrath of God have been zeroed out. There is no longer a balance for you to pay since Jesus paid it all on the cross.

There are two types of forgiveness. The first, is legal or judicial forgiveness. The second, is relational forgiveness. Legal forgiveness is in relation to the laws set forth by God. When we sin, God has the legal right to punish us for violating His sovereign decrees. When we trusted Christ, we were legally forgiven in the courtroom of Heaven and our record was wiped clean. This is why we can't lose our salvation because there is no double jeopardy with God. Yet, we still ask for forgiveness even though we have already been forgiven. Why? Because of the second type of forgiveness, which is called relational or parental forgiveness. Just like a parent who loves their child regardless of the wrong they do, that parent still desires to hear the child say I am sorry for offending you. God our Father wants to hear the same from us even though the price for our sins has already been paid through Jesus. If God the Father is willing to forgive us, how can we not forgive others?

### Getting Started

1. Why is forgiveness such a difficult topic for us to talk about?
2. Has there ever been a time where you have had to ask someone for forgiveness? Or, someone has asked you for forgiveness? What was that experience like?

### Let's Get Personal

1. If there is someone in your life whom you need to ask for forgiveness, how will you seek forgiveness from them?
  2. Do you forgive and forget? Why or Why not?
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3. If a person keeps sinning and hurting you, should you forgive them? Share the response with your circle or group members.
4. Is it ever appropriate to put conditions on your forgiveness? Why or Why not? Explain your response to the circle or group members.
5. How is a lack of forgiveness concerning someone else's sin or failing to confess your own sin impacting your relationships with others? How is it affecting your relationship with God?

### Take the Next Step

1. What can you do this week to either forgive or ask for forgiveness? What do you need to ask God to work on in your heart regarding forgiveness?
2. Want to go deeper? Take a look at the following passages: 1 Peter 4:8; Matthew 6:14-15; 18:21-22; Mark 11:25; Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:13; 1 John 1:9; James 2:13.

### Renew Your Mind

*"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Colossians 3:13*

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