

How to Talk with God

Ready for Forgiveness

Matthew 6:12 & Luke 11:4a

Jesus has been teaching us how to pray as we have studied the model prayer he gave in both Matthew 6 and Luke 11. We have learned that prayer is to be Simple/Sincere, Aware of God's Glory, Desiring God's Will, Honest About Our Needs, and today we learn how prayer requires that we are Ready for Forgiveness. Forgiveness...HELP!!!

Medical research studies have shown that forgiveness has numerous health benefits such as reducing anxiety, depression, stress, lowers blood pressure, improves sleep, reduces pain & fatigue. Yes, unforgiveness and harboring bitterness is bad for your health! It's killing you.

"Unforgiveness is like drinking poison & waiting for your enemy to die." **Unknown**

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." **Ephesians 4:32 – He forgave us, we must forgive others so...**

Unforgiveness is the elephant in the room during our conversations with God. We may want to thank him for his goodness, worship him for his beauty, ask him for what we need, and many other things. But, if we are harboring unforgiveness in our hearts God asks, *"Are you going to keep ignoring it, or can we talk about it?"*

Main Idea: Jesus teaches that Forgiveness Clears the Air in your Talk with God

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." **Matthew 6:12** and *"And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us."* **Luke 11:4a**

Those who Talk with God Must be Ready for Forgiveness in Two Ways

I. Receive Forgiveness from God - "And forgive us our debts..." Matt 6:12a & "And forgive us our sins..." Luke 11:4a

It's important to realize that Jesus is talking to disciples and followers who were already in a relationship with God the Father through himself, the Son. Meaning, the Lord's Prayer is written as a model prayer for those who are already saved. It's not meant for those who are unsaved or not yet born-again, but for those whose sins have been forgiven and atoned for by the blood of Jesus. So, this prayer is both an acknowledgment that we have been forgiven as well as a request for ongoing forgiveness for the many ways we still fall short of God's perfect righteousness.

"For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." **2 Corinthians 5:21 – Jesus did the work!**

There is indescribable joy in knowing that our sins are completely forgiven because Jesus died for us. His sacrifice on the cross was not just an act of love—it was the

full payment for our guilt and shame. Through His blood, we are no longer condemned but made righteous before God. The weight of our past is lifted, replaced with peace, freedom, and a deep sense of gratitude that transforms how we live each day. We no longer strive to earn God's approval; we rest in His grace, knowing that Christ's work is finished. This forgiveness restores our relationship with God and fills our hearts with hope, even when we fail. To be forgiven is to know the joy of being fully loved!

"In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight." **Ephesians 1:7-8 – It's good to be saved, forgiven and free!!!**

The foundational principle of our prayer time is that, as disciples of Jesus, God is our Father. For instance, if a son abandons ...is he still the son of his father? Yes. Because all that distance and all that rebellion won't change their DNA or blood...they are forever connected as father and son. However, while the RELATIONSHIP doesn't change, the FELLOWSHIP can be deeply damaged. They may still be related, but they are not connected and will not be without lots of confession and forgiveness.

When you pray, *"forgive us our debts"*, you are not asking to be saved again. As a believer your sins have been atoned for and forgiveness is yours, but you are admitting and confessing to the fact that you still struggle with sin which has deeply affected your fellowship (not relationship) with the Father and you are asking for his forgiveness as you confess and repent of those barriers that you continue to build.

"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us" **Psalms 103:11-12 – Forgiveness is there for the asking!**

II. Return Forgiveness to Others - "...as we also have forgiven our debtors." Matthew 6:12b & "...for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us." Luke 11:4b

Jesus teaches us to connect our request for forgiveness from God with our own extension of forgiveness to others. And, he actually includes an exclamation point immediately following this passage...

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." **Matthew 6:14-15 – Unforgiveness is a VERY BIG DEAL**

St. Augustine called this a *terrible petition* because he realized that if we pray it with an unforgiving heart, we are actually asking God NOT to forgive us.

Understanding Forgiveness (*aphimeî*: letting go, releasing):

- **What it IS:** Letting the Offender off the hook within your heart & mind
- **What is ISN'T:** Justification of the offense or Immediate Reconciliation

"And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive your trespasses." **Mark 11:25**

Theological Clarification: Is Jesus teaching we earn forgiveness (or salvation) from the Father through forgiving others? No! Remember, this is the prayer of a disciple of Jesus who has already been saved, not of an unbeliever asking to be saved.

“The plea is that of a child of God who has grieved his heavenly Father by some wrong attitude, thought, word, or deed and needs parental forgiveness...How can we logically, consistently, or morally ask God to forgive us if we ourselves are harboring an unforgiving spirit?” **John Phillips**

“If we have truly experienced God’s forgiveness, then we will have a readiness to forgive others...If I am not in fellowship with God, I cannot pray effectively. But fellowship with my brother helps to determine my fellowship with God; hence, forgiveness is important to prayer.” **Warren Wiersbe**

Three Postures Toward Forgiveness:

- **Living and Enjoying It:** You are free! Stay that way.
 - It’s not a one-time deal (i.e., Garth Brooks song).
- **Attempting and Desiring It:** Don’t lose heart. Let God help.
 - How do you know if you’ve forgiven?
- **Ignoring and Missing It:** Get saved. Impossible otherwise.
 - Forgiven people forgive. Get forgiven, & you’ll want to forgive.

Main Idea: Jesus teaches that Forgiveness Clears the Air in your Talk with God

“Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife & children & all that he had, & payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, & I will pay you everything.’ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him & forgave him the debt. But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, & seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ So his fellow servant fell down & pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, & I will pay you.’ He refused & went & put him in prison until he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, & they went & reported to their master all that had taken place. Then his master summoned him & said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.” **Matthew 18:23-35 – Jesus is the hero of forgiveness, he only asks...**
Clear the air by Receiving Forgiveness and Returning Forgiveness...

Guided Prayer Time: Praying, Ready for Forgiveness

- **Confess to God** – *Father, that you forgave me for...*
- **Return Forgiveness** – *Father, give me the strength to forgive...*

Sources & Further Reading Opportunities:

- CSB Study Bible – Trevin Wax (2017)
- Bible Exposition Commentary – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- Studies in the Sermon on the Mount – Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1976)
- The Sermon on the Mount – R. Kent Hughes (2001)
- Exploring the Gospel of Matthew – John Phillips (2014)
- The Message of the Sermon on the Mount – John Stott (1985)
- New American Commentary: Matthew – Craig Bloomberg (1992)
- Word Pictures in the New Testament – A.T. Robertson (1933)
- Tony Evans Study Bible – Tony Evans (2019)