

Matthew 6:12, 14-15: and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors . . . ¹⁴ For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, ¹⁵ but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Intro: We come to the 5th petition; In these last 3 petitions, we are asking our Father for everything we need!

Martyn Lloyd-Jones: Our whole life is found there in those three petitions, and that is what makes this prayer so utterly amazing. In such a small compass our Lord has covered the whole life of the believer in every respect. Our physical needs, our mental needs and, of course, our spiritual needs are included. The body is remembered, the soul is remembered, the spirit is remembered. And that is the whole of man.

Forgiveness is our greatest need. It's the greatest because through it we are reconciled to the greatest One: God!

And we still need forgiveness as believers! We will always need forgiveness in this life – for the rest of our lives: **daily!** God has not chosen to apply His great salvation work in such a way that we don't physically die anymore, and God has not chosen to apply His great salvation so that we don't sin anymore. We still get old and die. And we still battle and fight sin. Yet there's one big difference: physically we get older and older and die. Spiritually, we grow stronger and stronger, more holy and more holy, and more and more like Jesus Christ!

- **2 Corinthians 4:16:** Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day.
- **1 John 3:2:** Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.

1. We Are In **Debt** To God; 2. We Cannot Work Our Way Out Of This Debt; 3. We Pray For Forgiveness;
4. We Pray For Acceptance; 5. We Pray For Daily Forgiveness; 6. We Pray For Assurance Of Forgiveness;
7. We Pray That We Would Be So Amazed By Grace That We Would Eagerly Forgive Others

1. We Are In Debt To God (As believers: parental forgiveness and unbelievers: judicial forgiveness)

WLC 194: Acknowledging, that we & all others are guilty both of original & actual sin, and thereby become debtors to the justice of God: We owe God, & we have failed to pay up! We owe God our full & total love – perfect love! We owe God our full & total trust – perfect trust! We owe God our full & total obedience – perfect obedience! We owe God His full & total glory – perfect glory! In thought, word, feeling, & deed! We owe God full & total love for others – perfect love – in thought, word, feeling, & deed! We've failed to give God what we owe!

2. We Cannot Work Our Way Out Of This Debt (As believers: parental and unbelievers: judicial)

Neither we, nor any other creature, can make the least satisfaction for that debt: You cannot pay this debt to God that you owe. You can't work your way to earn forgiveness. You can't do more good deeds than bad and hope God will overlook your bad deeds. No other creature can cancel your debt (not mom or dad!).

- **Romans 4:5:** to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness

- **Ephesians 2:8-9:** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

3. We Pray For Forgiveness (As believers: parental and unbelievers: judicial)

We pray for ourselves & others that God of his free grace would, through the obedience & satisfaction of Christ, apprehended & applied by faith, acquit us both from the guilt & punishment of sin: We come to God as beggars, like the tax collector: "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

We owe God our full and total love – perfect love. Jesus loved God with full, total, and perfect love!

We owe God our full and total trust – perfect trust. Jesus trusted God with full, total, and perfect trust!

We owe God full & total obedience – perfect obedience. Jesus obeyed God with full, total, and perfect obedience!

We owe God His full and total glory – perfect glory – in thought, word, feeling, and deed. Jesus, in thought, word, feeling, and deed – gave God full, total, and perfect glory!

We owe God full and total love for others – perfect love – in thought, word, feeling, and deed. Jesus, in thought, word, feeling, and deed – fully, totally, and perfectly loved everyone!

Then Jesus died for our sin debt, & then rose from the dead! He paid the debt so we won't have to! Or we pay: hell

We want this forgiveness for us and others! **GOSPEL!**

4. We Pray For Acceptance (As believers: parental and unbelievers: judicial)

We pray that we would be accepted in Jesus, His Beloved: Why do we want to be forgiven? Because we want God! We want to be with our Father – in His presence where there's fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore!

And we are accepted in Christ! We're united to Jesus Christ! In union with Christ we are loved like Christ!

John 17:23: that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.

5. We Pray For Daily Forgiveness (As believers: parental forgiveness)

We pray that our Father would continue His favor & grace to us, pardon our daily failings: Christians are praying this prayer – Our Father! Christians still sin! We need continual, daily forgiveness!

1 John 1:8: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (Valley Of Vision – 76)

In Christ, all of our sins are forgiven (past, present, and future). Some have wrongly concluded from this that we don't need to pray for forgiveness. But our sin hinders our fellowship and relationship with God! So we pray!

Some have wrongly taught that Christians can get to a point where they don't sin anymore. But we continue to sin every day. & every day, we need to ask for forgiveness! You have sins in your life that you are not even aware of! Even our good works – tainted. Our tears of repentance are dirty. Sin is more than mere bad outward actions: Isaiah

Justin Dillehay: The reason we pray “Forgive us our debts” is not because we've lost our state of grace and need to be re-saved. Justification is permanent. Rather, confessing our sin reminds us there's more to salvation than being justified. Salvation also involves being sanctified and treated as sons. As a judge, God no longer sees our sin, because his “righteous” verdict removes all condemnation. But as a Father, he's quite aware of our remaining sin, and he wants us to be aware of it, too, so that we can fight it, kill it, and ask him to forgive it. But we must realize that God sees our sins as a loving Father, not as angry critic. That's how the Lord's Prayer begins: not “Our Judge,” but “Our Father”. We pray this petition from inside the family of God, not from the outside trying to get back in. It's true that the normal way of receiving forgiveness is through confessing and asking. And yet at least when it comes to specific sins, it's virtually certain we'll all die with unconfessed sin, simply because there are so many sins we're unaware of. Paul, for instance, knew that even though he wasn't conscious of any hidden sin in his life, that didn't make him innocent (1 Cor. 4:4). You might think that would make him fearful of facing God in death, but it didn't. Instead of condemnation, Paul expected “commendation”. Because he knew that beneath all his incomplete confession and imperfect repentance there was a Father-son relationship between him and God, built on the solid foundation of Jesus's blood and righteousness. That's why he was confident that, even with all the sins that had flown under his radar, death would usher him straight into the presence of Jesus. Every Christian can have that same confidence. Praying “Forgive us our debts” isn't just a duty we have as sinners; it's a privilege we have as sons. It doesn't simply remind us that we still sin; it assures us that our Father is eager to forgive. He looks for opportunities to show mercy. And that's why he gladly forgives our debts, time and time again (Peter-foot washing)

6. We Pray For Assurance Of Forgiveness (As believers)

We pray that our Father would fill us with peace & joy, in giving us daily more & more assurance of forgiveness: We pray that we would grow in the certainty that we are forgiven, not condemned, loved, & adopted!

- **Romans 4:7-8:** Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.
- **Romans 8:1:** There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.
- **John 2:1-2:** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.
- **1 John 3:1:** See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; & so we are!

7. We Pray That We Would Be So Amazed By Grace That We Would Eagerly Forgive Others

We're emboldened to ask, & encouraged to expect, when we have this testimony in ourselves, that we from the heart forgive others their offenses: 1) Forgiven people forgive, so if you're not a forgiving person, it may be evidence you're not forgiven by God; 2) Intimacy with the Father will not be restored if you don't forgive others

Matthew 6:12: forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors: We're asking our Father to forgive us by following our example! "Will You please forgive us in the same way we are forgiving others!"

Only petition with commentary: 6:14-15: 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

Read Matthew 18:21-35

- **What forgiveness isn't:** 1) Not the absence of anger at sin; 2) Not the absence of serious consequences for sin; 3) Not the absence of pursuing correction and repentance in the sinning person (Church Discipline)
- **What forgiveness is: Thomas Watson:** 1) Resist vengeful thoughts: Rom. 12:19: Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord."
2) Not seeking to do them mischief/harm: 1 Thessalonians 5:15: See that no one repays another with evil for evil.
3) Wishing them well: Luke 6:28: Bless those who curse you.
4) Grieving at their calamities: Proverbs 24:17: Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart be glad when he stumbles.
5) Praying for them: Matthew 5:44: But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.
6) Seeking reconciliation with them: Rom. 12:18: If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.
7) Being always willing to come to their relief: Exodus 23:4: If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey wandering away, you shall surely return it to him.

Peacemaker Ministries' 4 Promises Of Forgiveness: 1) I will not dwell on this incident.

2) I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you.

3) I will not talk to others about this incident.

4) I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship. (God, in Christ does this for us!)

Christ Came Forgiving All Our Debt
He Had No Debt Was Perfect Yet
Upon His Back Our Debt Was Set
His Father's Sword Was Raised And Whet
Then Pierced Him Through So Don't Forget
That Jesus Bore God's Wrathful Threat
He Died, It's Finished, Justice Met

With Mercy Then Christ Rose Reset
A Whole New Life In Him We Get
So Trust In Him And Never Fret
Forgiveness Give Don't Be Upset
Show Mercy, Love Without Regret
All Because Christ Took Our Debt!