

Lord, Teach us to Pray 4 – AS WE FORGIVE OTHERS

THE BIG IDEA: We pray as a people who have RECEIVED and therefore EXTEND GRACE. Our prayer must be informed, framed & consistent with the truth & power of GOSPEL.

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

First, I must LOOK in the MIRROR.

Key Point: UNREPENTED sin HINDERS our prayer.

- * Psalm 66:18 → God is not OBLIGATED to LISTEN while REBELLION remains ENTRENCHED.
- * Isa 59:1-2 → It's not that God loses POWER or COMPASSION, but that our SIN erects a WALL of separation.
- * Prov 28:9,13 → REFUSING to OBEY God's Word while expecting Him to respond to your petition is CONTRADICTION.
- * 1 Pet 3:12 → Even under the New Covenant, God's RESPONSIVENESS or otherwise is at least in part RELATIONAL.

→ What does it practically mean to 'look in the mirror' before you pray?

How have you seen unrepented sin affect your own prayer life?

→ Psalm 66:18 says God is not obligated to listen while rebellion remains entrenched. How does this challenge your perspective on daily confession and repentance?

→ How do you distinguish between a salvation issue and a fellowship issue when it comes to sin (1 John 1:8-9)?

→ How can we cultivate a habit of quick, proactive repentance in daily life?

THE MORAL: Embrace, nurture & cling onto a REPENTANT SPIRIT.

- * You don't need to repent EVERY TIME you make a LITTLE mistake, but if you do stray, you need to go running back (1 John 1:8-9).
- * This is not a SALVATION issue, but it is a FELLOWSHIP issue.
- * Sin does not UN-SAVE us, but CONFESSION of our sin RESTORES FELLOWSHIP.

PLAN A: Be QUICK to REPENT.

- * Do whatever it takes to keep your heart PURE, conscience CLEAN and line of fellowship WIDE OPEN.

AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS

How does unforgiveness affect our prayer?

- i) Unforgiveness POISONS our hearts & leaves us spiritually IMPRISONED (Heb 12:15) → Your prayer feels HOLLOW, lacking CONVICTION, FAITH & SINCERITY.
- ii) Unforgiveness makes us DEFENSIVE of our WOUNDS & ASHAMED before God (Gen 3:7-10) → Prayer thrives on TRANSPARENCY & AUTHENTICITY, not DEFENSIVENESS.
- iii) Unforgiveness damages our INTIMACY & FELLOWSHIP with the Lord (Matt 6:14-15) → Prayer from a DISTANCE is inevitably WEAKENED.
- iv) Unforgiveness WARPS our MOTIVES & DISTORTS the way we pray (James 4:3) → You're looking through a CLOUDY LENS ... Resentment BENDS our prayer INWARDS.
- v) Unforgiveness HINDERS the power & effectiveness of our PRAYER (Mark 11:24-25) → When you WITHHOLD MERCY from others, you CLOSE the very CHANNEL through which MERCY FLOWS into your own life.

→ Heb 12:15 warns that unforgiveness poisons our hearts. Have you noticed times when holding onto bitterness affected your prayer or your peace?

→ Why does unforgiveness make us hide from God (Gen 3:7-10)?

→ James 4:3 reminds us that unresolved resentment can warp our motives in prayer. How does that work?

THE SOLUTION: Become a HABITUAL, IMMEDIATE FORGIVER

... INSTINCTIVELY, DECISIVELY & CONSISTENTLY with NO strings attached (Eph 4:31-32, Col 3:12-14).

→ What barriers make habitual forgiveness difficult, and why?

→ What does it mean to be 'unoffendable'?

WHAT KIND OF COMMUNITY DO WE WANT TO BE?

- i) ALWAYS FULL OF GRACE
- ii) People of HUMILITY & WORSHIP
- iii) People of HONESTY & INTEGRITY
- iv) Living out FAMILY
- v) REFLECTING God's CHARACTER to the WORLD

→ What would it look like for our small group to be 'always full of grace'?

→ How do humility, honesty and integrity shape the way we pray, confess and forgive as a community?

→ How does forgiveness reflect God's character to the world around us?

How does extending grace within our group or church strengthen our ability to extend grace beyond it?