



a study on
PRAYER



Yes, No & Maybe

1. I have had to ask God for forgiveness more than most of the people in this room.
2. There is someone here that I have not forgiven.
3. Forgiving people who haven't asked for it is dangerous.
4. I'm afraid of offering forgiveness to some people, because there is a real possibility that they are going to hurt me over and over again.
5. God won't forgive you if you don't have a forgiving heart yourself.

Dig Deeper

› **READ Matthew 6:12** (NIV)

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

» **12 Forgive** - [aphékamen - ἀφήκαμεν] Literally, to send away, to dismiss, to wipe off. The translation rightly gives the force of the past tense, we **have** forgiven; since Christ assumes that he who prays for the remission of his own debts has already forgiven those indebted to him.

- What is the most difficult part of forgiving other people who have wronged us?

» **12 Debts** - [opheilémata - ὀφειλήματα] In the ancient Greek ὀφειλήμα [opheilēma] is common for actual legal debts as in Rom. 4:4, but here it is used of moral and spiritual debts to God.

- The metaphor Jesus uses for sins is that of debts, which suggests unmet obligations in our relationship with God.

-What are the unmet obligations that mankind most often needs to be forgiven of from God?

« Sin is likened to a 'debt' because it deserves to be punished. But when God forgives sin, he remits the penalty and drops the charge against us. What does that say about Him?

Notes

Dig Deeper... Continued

» **12 As we also have forgiven our debtors** - [aphékamen - ἀφίκαμεν] Jesus does not want anyone to misunderstand here, so he states it categorically in verses 14-15: “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

• Is “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” a curse upon us or a blessing?

« The New Testament states this several times. In **Matthew 5:7** Jesus says, “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” A merciless, unforgiving heart will receive neither forgiveness nor mercy. **James 2:13** says the same: “Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful.” And our Lord’s powerful parable in **Matthew 18:32-35** of the man who was forgiven 10,000 talents by his lord but refused to forgive his own slave a 100-denarii debt ends with this terrifying warning: *“Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart.”*

• How does the state of your heart regarding forgiveness indicate grace or not?

« C. S. Lewis wrote:

“No part of his teaching is clearer: and there are no exceptions to it. He doesn’t say that we are to forgive other people’s sins provided they are not too frightful, or provided there are extenuating circumstances, or anything of that sort. We are to forgive them all, however spiteful, however mean, however often they are repeated. If we don’t, we shall be forgiven none of our own.”

• How do we forgive so that it reflects God’s character and not just our transactional desire to get something out of it for ourselves?

• What does this concern of God tell you about His character?



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My Prayer...

1. What are debts of others that I need to wipe away?
2. How am I reflecting the character of God in the way that I am offering forgiveness?
3. What new aspect of God’s character does He want me to know?