

"FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS"

Matthew 6:12

Introduction: This prayer is a MODEL. We should study it closely and note all that is called for. To ask for our daily bread to be supplied goes with this next phrase, "...*AND forgive us our debts...*" Before one can truly and honestly pray for this petition, he/she must realize that he/she needs to pray it and that one must have a sense of sin. Most people have the wrong conception of sin - if they live decent, ordinary, respectable lives, they feel sin has nothing to do with them.

I. THE BIBLE USES 5 DIFFERENT WORDS FOR SIN

1. Hamartia: "to miss a target." Thus the failure to be all that one could have been or to have done all that one could have done.
2. Parabasis: "stepping across a line." Thus getting on the wrong side of the line of right and truth. Is there anybody who can claim to have ALWAYS remained on the right side?
3. Paraptoma: "to slip across." Thus an act of being on the wrong side accidentally, losing self-control.
4. Anomia: "lawlessness." Thus a deliberate act, knowing what is right and wrong, yet deliberately breaking that law, to defy or do a forbidden thing, knowingly.
5. Opheilema: "a debt that is not paid." Thus the failure to fulfill one's duty to his/her fellow man. To always react rightly, to always have the right attitude.

It is perfectly clear that all have sinned and all need to be forgiven: From God and from each other.

II. TO PRAY THIS PRAYER IS THE MOST FRIGHTENING OF ALL THESE PETITIONS

1. To ask God to forgive us in proportion as we have forgiven others is quite disturbing for who has not said, "I will never forgive so and so for what he/she has done to me." Did you know that we are saying to God: "don't forgive me for I haven't forgiven so and so?"
2. There is no such thing as Divine forgiveness WITHOUT human forgiveness. The door closed to human forgiveness is closed on both sides for there will be no divine forgiveness either.
3. If a person is not right with his/her brother/sister, he/she cannot put things right with God.

III. THINGS WE MUST LEARN IN ORDER TO FORGIVE OTHERS

1. We must learn to understand that people do things for a reason: worried, in pain, misunderstood, misinformed. Life is difficult for us all.
2. We must learn to forget. As long as we bring back up that unpleasant experience with so and so, we will always bring back up those bitter feelings. To say, "I will never forget how so and so treated me..." we are in danger for it makes it impossible for God to forgive us.
3. We must learn how to love. Christian love is that benevolent, undefeatable good-will love. That love which never looks for anything back. That love which looks for the best in others and passes over the bad and inferior.

CONCLUSION:

1. To pray this petition and receive forgiveness from God, the Father, we must first have already forgiven all who have hurt us and we have felt that they owed us something.
2. Only after our hearts are clear from any withheld forgiveness will we be able to be forgiven by our heavenly Father, no matter how often or hard we beseech Him.
3. Search your heart, soul and mind, is there anybody, any situation that is unforgiven still yet?