



River Rock Fellowship

Helping People Take Their Next Step Toward Christ Together

PRAY FIRST PRAYER CAMPAIGN - DAY 6

*Our Father in heaven,
Hallowed be Your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
**And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.**
And do not lead us into temptation,
But deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.
Matthew 6:9-13*

" And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors "

In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus says, "Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors." (Matthew 6:12). The second phrase in this prayer relates to our need to extend forgiveness. Think about what that prayer is saying: "Father, we want You to forgive us in the very same way that we forgive other people." Ouch!

The word, "as" in this sentence is an important aspect in what Jesus is showing us in this prayer. It's connecting these two acts of forgiveness, not separating them. What is Jesus saying to us about the relationship between receiving God's forgiveness and extending it to others? First, *forgiveness is granted, not earned*. The greatest misconception people have about forgiveness is thinking people have to earn forgiveness. We think our offender has to be repentant or make restitution before we can forgive. Nothing could be further from the truth. We forgive unconditionally, unilaterally, like the king did in Matthew 18 beginning at verse 23. Why did he forgive such an enormous debt from his slave? The king recognized his offender was powerless to repay the debt he owed. So he said, "The better thing is to let go of that offense." But more importantly, the king forgave this debtor so he could move on with his own life. You see, forgiveness is the process by which you say to God, "What this person did was wrong. They deserve to pay for what they've done. But today I'm letting go of my right to hurt them for hurting me so that I can be free to get on with my life." Forgiveness isn't about denying that you were wronged. It's not minimizing your experience. Forgiveness is the process by which we let go of that offense so that we can move on with our lives.

Second, we see that *forgiveness is the obligation of the forgiven*. The reason we forgive and let go of offenses against us is because of the forgiveness we have received from God. Some of you have been deeply hurt by another person. Please understand this, Jesus is not minimizing the hurt you've experienced. He understands it. He knows what it's like to be betrayed by those closest to you, to be deserted by friends. He understands all of those emotions. What He's asking you to do is to put that hurt in perspective. You see, we tend to focus on what other people have done to us without focusing on the hurt we have caused God through our sin. And Jesus said, "Before you get all hung up on this wrong that's been committed against you, remember the hurt that you have caused a holy God."

That's why there is a relationship between receiving forgiveness and extending forgiveness to other people. A person who truly understands and accepts the payment God made for their sin cannot help but forgive other people.

Prayer: "Father, Thank you for showing me unfailing grace. As You have so freely forgiven me, I also want to freely forgive others. Please help me let go of all my offenses. I release to You those who have hurt me, and I trust You to handle those situations according to Your perfect will."

Today's devotion is excerpted from "Food for Thought"

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