

Foundations Bible Study - Prayer  
Lesson 3

**Scripture Readings:**

1. Matthew 6:5-15
2. Matthew 18:21-35
3. John 10:1-21, (key verse is verse 10)

**Lesson**

This is lesson 3 about prayer and how the Lord's Prayer teaches us to pray. We will look at the next two sections of the prayer which are:

"Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us."

"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil"

This first section is the most haunting and the hardest to write about, even harder to deal with. I cry out for forgiveness, long for it, need it, and receive it, on a daily basis. The Love, Mercy, and Grace of God are the most amazing part of Christianity.

God always forgives. I've preached that time and time again, but here in the prayer and later in Matthew's gospel the tables seem to change. Forgiveness comes with a stipulation:

"I must forgive others!"

I don't really like that part at all. But the truth be told, God is a God of relationships. Love is the key to relationships and enduring, strong relationships have forgiveness at their very core. My wife and I have been together for 23 years now; she is a master of forgiveness. Myself, like 99.9% of men mess up a lot in these relationship things. We just don't get it. I am blessed that my wife forgives, she gets it. We all need to get it, as we live together in marriage and teach our children, forgiveness must be a strong and real part of marriage.

What about other relationships. I love my wife more and differently than anyone else on earth. Yet, here Christ asks us to forgive more people than just the ones we love the most. God seems to be telling us to forgive all those folks who wrong us and others.

This, my friends is hard, dirty work. With God's help I pray we all can learn to forgive. We must if we are to live in a world free of hate and violence. Forgiveness is at the foundation of our faith and when we are out practicing the faith. I know this is very hard for you and me, but that does not let us off the hook, forgive me Lord as I forgive others. (A little secret: Pray for your enemies.....)

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Let us move to the next phrase, maybe it will be a little easier to swallow. “Lead us not into temptation,” that makes good sense. Well, maybe: that sounds like a life full of boring days and nights to me. I would rather pray protect me and strengthen me as I dive into the world of temptation. We all want to live life to its fullest. We tend to think that wild and sinful things are a part of that full life. I’m not so sure that is true, and I’m afraid Christ’s prayer may be right. We need help with our lives, we need guidance, we need God’s help, and God can help us stay away from the temptations that we so easily fall into. And I have to say that does NOT mean living a boring life without fun and rewards. I can not explain it totally, but I do know this: “the day after is better when God has been a part of the night before.” Maybe we all just need to think ahead a bit and pray..... Lead me not into temptation. It can not hurt, especially tomorrow in our relationships and lives.

**Questions for Thought and Discussion**

1. What kinds of things are the hardest to forgive?
2. Is forgiveness good for the soul? Why or Why not?
3. What does a full, fun life mean to you?
4. Which is better for you, strength to deal with temptation or avoiding temptation? Can you explain?