



JESUS ACTS

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Pray like this: Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. "If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. (Matthew 6:9-14)

Why is prayer important?

Praying is not easy. It is hard, it takes learning, it does not come naturally. It requires patience, commitment and for us to fully focus on God (1 Thes. 5:17-18).

'and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us.' (Matthew 6:12: NLT)

FORGIVE US

Forgiveness is the releasing of a debt. It's interesting how in the Lord's prayer Jesus moves from food which is a basic physical requirement, to forgiveness which is a primary spiritual need. In this part of the prayer Jesus is instructing us as believers to pray for forgiveness of our sins (1 John 1:9-10, Matthew 26:28).

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FORGIVE?

Asking for forgiveness is as important as granting it. Forgiveness is a costly business. It takes everything in our humanity to honestly say to somebody, please forgive me. And it is just as demanding to be able to utter the phrase I forgive you (Psalm 103:10-13).

AS WE FORGIVE OTHERS

The forgiven person is to be a forgiving person. While this statement is true it is very difficult to live out in our lives. Our relationships with each other is a picture of our relationship with God.

1. Forgiveness is a priority

As believers we cannot only demonstrate godly characteristics when times are good; we have to demonstrate godly characteristics when times are at their worst.

Our response shows our belief in God, the strength and power of God. Therefore, forgiveness is a priority.

Lord, if you kept a record of our sins, who, O Lord, could ever survive? But you offer forgiveness, that we might learn to fear you. (Psalm 130:3-4)

2. Forgiveness is a promise not a feeling

Forgiveness, as it comes to us from God, comes to us not so much as an expression of the heart of God but it is ultimately a promise from the Word of God (Ephesians 4:32).

And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins. (Hebrews 8:12)

3. Forgiveness is a choice

As believers with the help of the Holy Spirit we are to be people that can forgive someone while we are still hurting because it's what God expects of us (Matthew 6:14, Psalm 133:1-3).

Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn others, or it will all come back against you. Forgive others, and you will be forgiven. (Luke 6:37)

4. Forgiveness is obedience

Forgiveness is an essential part of our obedience to God. Forgiving someone is an act of obedience. Jesus was not suggesting we forgive one another, He was commanding us to.

Then Peter came to him and asked, "Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?" "No, not seven times," Jesus replied, "but seventy times seven!" (Matthew 18:21-22)



HOW DO WE PRACTISE FORGIVENESS?

As believers we are to be people that do not merely hear the word but people that put it into practice.

1. We must remember our own sins

We are all God's debtors. We are all sinners (Romans 3:23, Galatians 3:22).

2. The unpayable debt

As a result of our sinful nature doing things that we should not do, saying things we should not say, the debt that we owe to God gets bigger and bigger every day (Romans 7:17-19, Romans 3:20).

3. We must learn to forget

Forgiveness is not the same as forgetting. God, who has infinite knowledge, chooses not to remember our sins (Colossians 3:13).

I yes, I alone will blot out your sins for my own sake and will never think of them again. (Isaiah 43:25)

4. We must learn to love and pray

When we act in loving ways towards those who hurt us like serving them, praying for them not only does it overcome evil in their hearts, but it also overcomes evil in us (1 Cor. 13:4-5, Romans 12:20-21, Mat. 5:44).

CONCLUSION

But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too. (Mark 11:25)

So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. (Eph. 1:6-7)