

# Forgiving Others

Read Matthew 6:9-15

Notice that the Lord's Prayer puts a condition on God forgiving our sins:

*"Forgive us our debts **as we also have forgiven our debtors.**"*  
(Matthew 6:12, NIV)

If we want our sins forgiven, we must also forgive those who wrong us. This is so important that immediately after the Lord's Prayer, Jesus emphasizes that one point:

*"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."* (Matthew 6:14-15, NIV)

Why would our Father, so anxious to forgive us, put such a condition on our forgiveness? Why must we forgive others in order to be forgiven? Why are the giving and receiving of forgiveness inseparable?

- We cannot embrace forgiveness as the solution for our sins without embracing it for others as well. Either forgiveness is the solution for sin or it isn't.
- Forgiveness cannot flow *to* us until it can flow *through* us.
- Until we grant forgiveness to the one who wronged us, we too are enslaved by their sin. We who were wronged continue to suffer - we suffer lovelessness, resentment, anxiety, anger, and more. We cannot enjoy the blessing and freedom of forgiveness until we both receive it for the wrongs we do and give it to those who wrong us.
- We tend to excuse our wrongs and blame others for theirs. Jesus urges us to do the opposite: excuse others and be more aware of our own failings.

An unforgiving heart is an unloving heart. It is a heart diseased with self-centeredness and bitterness. We cannot enjoy an open Father-to-child relationship with our forgiving God if we refuse to both give and receive forgiveness.