

## Forgiveness #2

We can be so blind to our own faults. We cover them up. We rationalize them. We blame them on circumstances or on others. We do anything we can to sweep them under the rug. Often we successfully ignore our wrongs until we are faced with them in the pain and anger of those we love.

We tend to excuse ourselves and blame others. The Lord's Prayer teaches us the opposite. For our own good we need to be more conscious of our own failings and more willing to forgive the failings of others. For all of us, for an entire race caught in its own sinfulness and helplessness, there is no alternative to forgiveness. Sin is a debt we cannot pay.

But we cannot embrace forgiveness for ourselves without embracing it for others, including those who have wronged us. Forgiveness cannot flow *to* us until it can flow *through* us to others. Notice that after giving us the Lord's Prayer, this is the one point Jesus emphasizes. *"If you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."* (Matthew 6:14-15, NIV)

Either we accept forgiveness as the response to sin or we don't. We cannot choose it for ourselves and deny it to others. Remember, the debt others owe us is infinitely small compared to the debt we owe God. (Read Matthew 18:23-35.)

When a wrong has been done, pain is the result. Releasing that pain is difficult whether we committed the wrong or someone else wronged us. But God's forgiveness is both free and freeing. In the grip of guilt, we always have the option of receiving His forgiveness, simply and immediately.

And when we've been hurt by another, He gives us the freedom to forgive that person completely. We always have the privilege of passing along the wonderful forgiveness we have received. We don't need to wait for the other person to come to us. If we look to God and depend on Him, He will enable us to love and understand others as He loves and understands them.

Loving Father, morning by morning bathe our hearts, our homes, our friendships, our workplace, our church, and our world in the healing and peace of Your forgiveness. Spread Your beautiful forgiveness through me.

Hymn: [The Joy of Forgiveness](#)

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