



## Now for the hard part!

'Is it harder to forgive or ask for forgiveness?' Why not spend some time discussing this question!



In the last part of the Lord's Prayer we were studying we looked at the line 'Forgive us our sins'. Asking for forgiveness is hard, it requires us humbling ourselves and admitting we've been wrong. Now the prayer adds to the theme of forgiveness (perhaps watch the clip here again [The Lord's Prayer](#)) and goes on to say 'as we forgive those who sin against us' We're not just asked to pray to be forgiven but we're also expected to forgive others too!

Think of a time when you found it hard to forgive someone- what was it that made it so hard?

Usually forgiveness feels hard because there is hurt or anger. We often find ourselves wanting to show someone just how they've made us feel by hurting them back. Forgiveness doesn't feel like something we can or should do.

## Whole hearted

Jesus's disciples found the idea of forgiveness tricky too. Peter even asked Jesus how many times he should forgive his brother in Matthew 18v21-22! Jesus's answer is interesting He tells Peter he should forgive him 70x7 times! Does that mean that we forgive someone 490 times and then we give up? For some of the people we know they might use that up pretty quickly!



In the Bible the number 7 is used to show that something is complete or perfect- there are 7 days of God's creation for example. (Interestingly there's also 7 parts to this special prayer!)

Seven is also used to show release or healing. In the Jewish Law every 7 years anyone who had a debt was to be released from it, to have the debt cancelled & we can read in 2 Kings 5 v 9-10 about how Elisha tells Naaman the commander of the King of Aram's army to wash 7 times in the River



### What do we want our children to know?

To understand that we have all sinned and that we need God's forgiveness which He freely gives when we ask Him.

To know He wants us to share that same forgiveness with other people.

To understand that forgiveness doesn't just give healing to the person we forgive but it heals our hearts too filling them with God's peace and love.



### Memory Verse

Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Ephesians 4v32

### OLDER GROUPS TEACHING

Jordan to be healed of his leprosy.

By telling the disciples to forgive 70x7 times He's using a symbol they would understand to show that they should forgive someone totally and completely; to release them from their sin and to restore them.

Scientists have actually found that feelings of anger, revenge and dwelling on the hurts other people have caused us can cause physical damage to parts of our bodies- especially our hearts! They've actually conducted forgiveness experiments that show that when people living with failing hearts, chronic pain or with addiction problems actually practiced forgiveness their symptoms improved! When we forgive we need to put down our hurt and anger, we let go of them and give them to God, this helps soften our hearts and allows God to penetrate them, to restore them with his love and give us peace.

Remember in all this teaching we are being told how to pray, we're asking for God's help. Jesus knows it isn't easy but with God, the ultimate restorer's strength in us it can be done!

## But why?

So why should we forgive- is it just because ultimately it'll make us feel better to not carry around horrible feelings?



Jesus carries on explaining to his disciples in Matthew 18 and He uses a story to help them to understand. [The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant](#)

The servant is a picture of us, the King is a picture of God. Our debt to God is huge- we've sinned and messed up and got it wrong so often... and yet through Jesus's death on the cross our debt is cancelled. We don't deserve it- it's grace!

If we have prayed to be forgiven from our own sins, and God has done it so undeservingly then we are called to show mercy to other people around us too. When we forgive others who don't deserve it we share that picture of God's love with them. We are to forgive as we have been forgiven, to love as we've been loved. Forgiveness won't always make everything right straight away, there are some times when the hurt people cause means it's right for us to put some space between us. But when we are willing to forgive it can lead to healing, to peace, to love and that brings God's Kingdom here on Earth- can you see how it all fits together?

**'Heavenly Father, you are so wonderfully amazing.**

**I thank you that you give me everything I need, thank you that you care about the health of my body and my Spirit.**

**Father, I've messed up, I've sinned and got it wrong. I'm so sorry, I know I've let you down. I thank you that you will always forgive me. Please help me to be more like you. Help me I pray to forgive the people who hurt me, please Lord take the hurt and sadness I feel away and give me your peace. I pray that you would be with the person who's hurt me too let them know you are with them and help me to show them that love, please give me your strength to do it.**

**Amen'**

## TEATIME TEASERS

- Be intentional in practicing your forgiveness this week. Be willing to forgive your family when things go wrong and think about how you react when things go wrong? How does the atmosphere at home change when everyone practices having a forgiving spirit?
- Is there anyone who you need to forgive? Is there any hurt you're holding onto from where someone has treated you badly. Spend some time praying and asking God to help you forgive, ask Him to take the pain, anger and hurt and fill your heart with His peace and love instead.
- Pray for those who persecute you... in Matthew 5v44 Jesus tells us to 'love our enemies and pray for those who persecute you.' When we pray for for the people who hurt us and we ask for God's blessing upon them then our hearts will gradually be softened towards them. Again it's something we need to do with God's strength, but it's another step towards forgiveness.



1

THIS IS A CRAFT YOU CAN KEEP ADDING TO OVER THIS SERIES TO HELP YOU TO LEARN THE LORD'S PRAYER. MAKE YOUR OWN, PRAYER KEYRING OR BRACELET. YOU COULD USE WIRE, ELASTIC, STRING OR A PIPE CLEANER. THIS WEEK ADD A **PINK** BEAD TO REMEMBER THAT WE NEED TO ASK GOD FOR HIS HELP TO FORGIVE OTHER PEOPLE WHO SIN AGAINST US. KEEP IT SOMEWHERE SAFE SO YOU CAN CONTINUE ADDING BEADS EACH WEEK.

2

WHAT DOES FORGIVENESS LOOK LIKE? SPEND SOME TIME THINKING ABOUT HOW IF WE'VE CHOSEN TO FORGIVE SOMEONE IT WILL AFFECT HOW WE TREAT THEM. E.G. RESPOND CURTLY/ RESPOND PLEASANTLY, IGNORE SOMEONE/ACKNOWLEDGE OR SMILE AT THEM, BE PLEASED TO SEE THEM STRUGGLE WITH SOMETHING/OFFER TO HELP, BITE BACK AND SAY SOMETHING TO HURT SOMEONE/BE SILENT... THERE'S LOTS OF WAYS THAT WE CAN REINFORCE OUR FORGIVENESS. IT DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN GOING OVERBOARD OR PUTTING OURSELF BACK INTO SITUATIONS TO BE HURT OVER AND OVER AGAIN OR BEHAVING IN A WAY THAT ISN'T TRUTHFUL BUT IT'S ABOUT NOT CHOOSING TO ADD OUR OWN SINS IN ON TOP OF THE OTHER PERSONS.



3

FORGIVENESS CAN HELP HEAL OUR HEARTS AND OTHER PEOPLE'S HEARTS- WHEN WE FORGIVE AND GIVE GOD YOUR BITTERNESS AND HURT HIS LOVE AND PEACE CAN ENTER. WHY NOT HAVE A GO AT COLOURING THIS HEART PUZZLE. YOU COULD ADD THE WORD 'FORGIVE' ON IT TO. THEN CUT IT OUT AND USE IT TO HELP YOU TO PUT THE PIECES BACK TOGETHER.



[HEART PUZZLE](#)