

Forgive Us Our Debts

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

MATTHEW 6:12

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Jesus teaches us to pray,
“Forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors” (Mt 6:12).
These are the words He uses
inside the prayer.

“Debts” speaks of what we owe God.
“Debtors” speaks of what others owe us.
This is relational language
inside the family of God.

Positional forgiveness is secure (Eph 1:7).
Relational forgiveness is daily,
the restoring of closeness
where sin has bent us
and cooled our love.

This is the only part of the prayer
Jesus repeats after the prayer.
Later He says,
“If you forgive others their offenses,
your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
But if you do not forgive others,
your Father will not forgive your offenses”
(Mt 6:14–15).

Here Jesus uses a different word
than “debts,” which He used in the prayer.
“Offenses” does not refer
to major betrayals.
It refers to the small wounds,
the minor irritations,

the everyday slights
that grow into bitterness
if left alone.

These small offenses
are dangerous because they multiply.
They take root.
They harden the heart.
The author of Hebrews warns,
“See to it that no root of bitterness
springs up and causes trouble,
and by it many become defiled”
(Heb 12:15).

Bitterness spreads.
Unforgiveness spreads.
A seed becomes a plant.
A plant flowers.
The flowers release seeds.
And when we speak,
the seeds fly out
on our breath
and enter the ear
of the listener.
And unforgiveness
spreads again.

So what does it mean
that God “won’t forgive”
forgiven people?
It means the Father
withholds relational closeness
when we withhold forgiveness
from others.
Not the fact of forgiveness,
but the experience of it.
Not our standing,
but our fellowship.

Forgiveness restores
relationship with God
and protects relationship

with others.

It keeps the heart soft.

It keeps the family whole.

You may not know this about Jesus:

He taught us to pray for mercy as often as bread.

“Forgive us our debts,” Father.

Cleanse our hearts.

Heal our relationships.

Pull out every root

before it grows.

Let Your mercy

shape our life

and our love.