Forgive Us Our Debts

**Learning Activity:**

**Discussion Questions:**

1. What were some of the lessons you learned from your mistake?

2. What are some ways that God uses mistakes to grow us?
Learning Activity:

“Forgive us our debts”

In the previous modules, we have explored a number of fresh and creative ways to pray through the Lord’s Prayer. It’s not meant to be a trite, formulaic kind of prayer. Rather, it is a model or template that we can use to have extended times of prayer before our heavenly Father. God wants us to experience all of the fullness of what it means for Him to be our Father. He desires closeness and authenticity with each of His children. Secondly, we focused on unique ways that we can declare “hallowed be Your name” as we consider the character and reputation of God. The third module injected the idea of prayerwalking as a creative way to pray about God’s kingdom and will to be established in our lives and communities. And from the last meeting and for homework you were encouraged to go to God with “Daily Bread” needs in your life.

In this section, we will explore the portion of the Lord’s Prayer that centers on the phrase “forgive us our debts” from Matthew 6:9-13:

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be Your name,
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from the evil one.
In his book, _A Layman Looks at the Lord’s Prayer_, Phillip Keller recounts a personal story involving a potter in the back streets of Pakistan. Keller had asked the elderly man if he could watch him work his craft on a potter’s wheel. With his consent, Keller followed the Pakistani man into a dank, dark room away from the bustling shops. The potter had begun to spin the potter’s wheel when:

_Suddenly, as I watched, to my utter astonishment, I saw the stone stop. Why? I looked closely. The potter removed a small particle of grit from the goblet. His fingers had felt its resistance to his touch. He started the stone again. Quickly he smoothed the surface of the goblet. Then just as suddenly the stone stopped again. He removed another hard object - another tiny grain of sand – that left a scar in the side of the clay._

_A look of anxiety and concern began to creep over the aged craftsman’s face. His eyes began to hold a questioning look. Would the clay carry within it other particles of sand or grit or gravel that would resist his hands and wreck his work? Would all his finest intentions, highest hopes, and wonderful wishes come to nothing?_

_Why is my Father’s will – His intention to turn out truly beautiful people brought to naught again and again? Because of their resistance, because of their hardness. Why, despite His best efforts and endless patience with human beings, do they end up a disaster? Simply because they resist His will, they will not cooperate, they will not comply with His commands. His hands – those tender, gentle, gracious hands – are thwarted by our stubborn wills._

_(in The Inspirational Writings of Phillip Keller, p. 205-206)_

_Sin in our lives is a lot like grit. Sin in many ways represents resistance in our lives to the work of the master potter. He is shaping and molding our lives on the potter’s wheel. Yet, we often cling to attitudes, habits, thoughts, and behaviors that act as “gritty” opposition to the Master’s hands. Jesus is making it very clear- we must confess the grit in our lives. We must come clean before the Lord and ask Him to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. When we do that on a regular basis 1 John 1:8-9 reminds us that God is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins._

_Let’s be honest though; it takes courage and humility to come to God with sin in our lives. It can be much more comfortable to stay in denial. But that is just what the enemy of our souls wants. Satan knows that unconfessed sin, which stays in the darkness, has a way of interfering with God’s work in our lives. This part of the Lord’s prayer is a reminder that we must be diligent to not let grit remain hidden. Name your sins_
specifically, as the Holy Spirit brings them to mind and receive the cleansing that your soul, mind, and heart need.

One final thought...forgiveness of personal sin has a direct connection with the command to forgive others. When Jesus taught the Lord’s Prayer He made it clear – we are to forgive others just as we ourselves have received forgiveness. Often, this is easier said than done and requires a choice of our wills. Granting forgiveness to others is never easy especially when someone else has thrown “grit” on to our lives. I often want to say, “would you please keep your grit to yourself, I have enough in my own life without you helping me out...thank you very much!” With this in mind, keep short accounts with wrongs that others have inflicted upon you. Believe it or not, it is in your own best interest to let the debt go, rather than harboring bitterness and resentment. Choosing to forgive will grant freedom and vitality in your life. That is why Jesus connected the two ideas together when He taught on forgiveness of sin.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you as you read the article?

2. What principles from the article are you most challenged by and why?

3. What questions or reservations do you have about asking God for forgiveness?

4. What challenges do you face in forgiving others?

Learning Activity:

Instructions: Take some time on your own to allow God to remind you of unconfessed sin in your life. Allow the categories below to get you thinking about your thoughts and actions over the past 14 days. In your private time simply ask God to bring to mind by His Spirit any area of your life that needs to be confessed and forgiven. Take a portion of time with each word and ask, “Father is there any way that I have demonstrated _________ in the last 14 days.” If something comes to mind ask Him to forgive you and then move on to the next word. Feel free to do the whole exercise silently in prayer or if you are more comfortable use the space provided below to write out your prayers. You might want to use a phrase like, “Father, I confess that I have been ______ when I _______. I ask that you would forgive me and cleanse me.
Anger
Pride
Self-sufficiency
Not trusting God
Lust
Envy
Boasting
Self-pity
Resentment
Jealousy
Hurting another with my words
Negative attitude
Gluttony
Money or possession focused
Disobeying God
Lies or half truths

Learning Activity:

Part 1: Thank God that He is your Father and wants a close relationship with each of you.

Part 2: Spend time honoring and praising God for who He is

Part 3: Ask God to establish His will in your life and in others (pray for specific examples that come to mind).

Part 4: Bring specific needs (yours and others) before God
1. Our Father in heaven,

2. hallowed be Your name,

3. Your kingdom come,

Your will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

4. Give us today our daily bread.

5. **Forgive us our debts,**

   as we also have forgiven our debtors.

**Homework:**

**Homework Assignment:** As we learned, forgiving others is a part of the Lord’s Prayer. For homework, take some time to consider the notion of forgiving others. Often, without realizing it, offenses from others can build up in our heart. Grit has a way of building up if we are not careful. Take some time this week to ask God to reveal to you the people and the offenses that you have not forgiven. Make a list on paper as the Lord helps you remember. Forgiving others does not mean we simply “forget.” But rather it is a choice. We are choosing to forgive so that we can experience full freedom in Christ. Do not expect this to be easy. But it is well worth the effort!

For each person on your list. say aloud: Father, I forgive ___________ for (specifically identify all offenses and painful memories)__________