

## **CoreGroup Guide | The Lord's Prayer - Part 3**

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### **Welcome**

Welcome to our third and last discussion of The Lord's Prayer. To begin our series we focused on the first line of the prayer. With the words "Our Father," Jesus invites us to see our relationship with God as intimate and comfortable while maintaining a reverence for his great position and power. Last week we considered what we should pray for. We were encouraged to make God's will (his kingdom) a priority before we offer up our own petitions of needs and wants. In this final session we explore two essential concepts of faith – forgiveness and evil.

### **Opening Prayer**

Abba, Father, thank you for the invitation to come before you. Thank you for this group gathered here to share in relationship with you and with one another. Sit with us and guide us in our discussion. Let each one be heard and loved in the name of Jesus. Amen

### **Ice Breaker**

We are full into the flavors of fall. Who knew there were so many ways to prepare, eat, and drink pumpkin?! What's your favorite pumpkin delight? Or if you don't like pumpkin at all, tell us another favorite fall flavor – coffee, tea, cider, cupcake, cookie– anything that says "fall" to your taste buds.

### **The Head**

If you have been in Christian circles for any length of time, you have probably heard numerous teachings on forgiveness. Every gospel account records Jesus speaking about forgiveness including a conversation with Peter where Peter tries to define and quantify what forgiveness requires. Paul frequently writes in his letters encouraging people to be kind and forgiving. If you aren't so familiar with the Bible, it is likely you've at least heard or read in secular sources the importance of forgiveness in relationships and as an element of good mental health. Either way, forgiveness is encouraged. Forgiveness is central to the gospel of Christ, so it makes sense that Jesus would include both aspects of forgiveness in this prayer.

### **Matthew 6:12**

*Forgive us for the ways we have wronged you, just as we also forgive those who have wronged us.*

- What does it mean to wrong God?
- What are the common ways we might wrong God?
- Why does God's forgiveness matter?
- What are the common ways we wrong one another?
- Why is it necessary for us to forgive others who have wronged us?

## **Matthew 6:13**

*And don't lead us into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.*

These words have been debated by scholars for centuries in an attempt to determine whether God does indeed tempt us or at least lead us into situations where temptation is strong.

In writing about this matter, James discusses the way testing may produce endurance and maturity in faith while at the same time calling out temptation to sin as an outgrowth of our own cravings. If you have time, a quick reading of James 1:2-15 may be helpful.

Whatever we believe about temptation, the focus of this section of the Lord's prayer is God's power to guide and protect us. A quick reading of Psalm 23:4 may offer us assurance as well.

- What does this part of the prayer mean to you? What images come to mind when you pray these words?
- What are some examples of extreme testing or temptation in scripture? Can you think of some examples of rescue from evil?
- How can the image of God as shepherd/protector encourage us in the evil of our day?
- How does this section compare with praying "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done"?

## **The Heart**

Often when we recite the Lord's Prayer, by the time we get to "Forgive us our trespasses" it can feel like we're on the downside just listing our petitions and on the way to the doxology, not paying all that much attention. And yet, as we break down the lines of The Lord's Prayer as we have done in this series, each line becomes more meaningful. God's forgiveness is central to our salvation and his protection is crucial for life.

- What makes forgiveness so difficult for us?
- What are the wrongs in your life that either need forgiveness or that you need to forgive?
- What do you fear when it comes to the testing of your faith? (This could be health issues, financial security and integrity, personal safety, loss, etc.)
- How do you define and witness evil in your community?

## **The Hands**

As you pray the Lord's Prayer this week or in other times of meditation, give special thought to forgiveness. Consider reading some of the scriptures listed in the Going Deeper section of this guide as you allow the Holy Spirit to lead you.

- Make a list of the wrongs of which you have been forgiven. This could include ways you have wronged God or wronged others.
- Specifically thank God for each forgiveness on your list.
- Make a second list of ways you have been wronged.
- Compare the two lists – looking for both commonalities and differences.
- Consider what steps you might want to take to move towards forgiveness.

## Closing Prayer

Abba God, thank you for this time we have shared today. We confess to you that we often fail to love you and to love others as you have commanded. Thank you that you do not remember all those failures, but that your forgiveness is complete. Give us strength to forgive the wrongs done to us so completely. Protect us on our way now and throughout the week. Let our love be our witness of Jesus. Amen

## Going Deeper

Some additional scriptures on forgiveness:

- Colossians 3:13 *Put on compassion*
- Matthew 18:21-22 *How many times*
- Ephesians 1 *God's grace of forgiveness*
- 1 John 1:9 *God is faithful to forgive*
- Matthew 6:14-15 *Give and receive forgiveness*
- Ephesians 4:32 *Be kind, forgiving*
- Mark 11:25 *Prayer and forgiveness*
- Luke 6:37 *As you judge, condemn, forgive, you'll receive*
- Luke 17:3-4 *Forgive every fault*
- Psalm 103:12-14 *Sins are removed and forgotten*
- Luke 23:34 *Jesus asks forgiveness for executioners*
- Psalm 32:1 *Transgression forgiven, sins covered*
- Daniel 9:9 *Forgiven even though we rebel*

## Additional Resources

From a special section on the Lord's prayer, here is an interesting essay about the phrase "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

<https://www.cslewisinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/leadUsNot.pdf>