

Too Comfortable?: Week 3

Sermon date 2/12/2017

QUICK REVIEW

- 1) Upon reviewing your notes from Sunday's teaching, was there anything that caught your attention?

The Goal

Last week the study and the message went in different directions. Thank you for your flexibility and understanding; this may happen from time to time. I encourage you as leaders to allow the Holy Spirit to use both the message and the study to speak to you and your group. This week we will continue with the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6:11-13. Forgiveness of others is the theme. We will unpack some misconceptions of what forgiveness means and what this passage is talking about. Please encourage your people to use their Chair Time Tools. The vision statement we are building over the course of this study will help clarify the vision for our people.

MY STORY

- 2) What theme or idea has God been speaking to you about personally throughout this study?
- 3) What was your takeaway from last week's study?

DIGGING DEEPER

Matthew 6:9-13 (ESV)ⁱ

⁹ Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
¹⁰ Your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
¹¹ Give us this day our daily bread,
¹² and forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
¹³ And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

4) In Verse 11, what does “daily bread” refer to in the life of the Christian?

Note: It is about daily food, but beyond that it is about the expectancy of God's presence in the believer's life. Think back to Exodus where the manna from God only lasted for a day. God longs to meet with us daily.

5) Verse 12 refers to “debts”. What is Jesus talking about?

“Debts” refer to sins. Let's be clear for a moment: Jesus is not linking forgiveness of others to salvation, but to freedom and restoration for the person offended.

6) There is a lot of misunderstanding of forgiveness in the world today. What are some common misconceptions?

TAKING IT HOME

Focus On the Family wrote the following about forgiveness:ⁱⁱ

- **Forgiveness is not letting the offender off the hook.** We can and should still hold others accountable for their actions or lack of actions.
- **Forgiveness is returning to God the right to take care of justice.** By refusing to transfer the right to exact punishment or revenge, we are telling God we don't trust him to take care of matters.
- **Forgiveness is not letting the offense recur again and again.** We don't have to tolerate, nor should we keep ourselves open to, lack of respect or any form of abuse.
- **Forgiveness does not mean we have to revert to being the victim.** Forgiving is not saying, "What you did was okay, so go ahead and walk all over me." Nor is it playing the martyr, enjoying the performance of forgiving people because it perpetuates our victim role.
- **Forgiveness is not the same as reconciling.** We can forgive someone even if we never can get along with him again.
- **Forgiveness is a process, not an event.** It might take some time to work through our emotional problems before we can truly forgive. As soon as we can, we should decide to forgive, but it probably is not going to happen right after a tragic divorce. That's okay.
- **We have to forgive every time.** If we find ourselves constantly forgiving, though, we might need to take a look at the dance we are doing with the other person that sets us up to be continually hurt, attacked, or abused.
- **Forgetting does not mean denying reality or ignoring repeated offenses.** Some people are obnoxious, mean-spirited, apathetic, or unreliable. They never will change. We need to change the way we respond to them and quit expecting them to be different.
- **Forgiveness is not based on others' actions but on our attitude.** People will continue to hurt us through life. We either can look outward at them or stay stuck and angry, or we

can begin to keep our minds on our loving relationship with God, knowing and trusting in what is good.

- **If they don't repent, we still have to forgive.** Even if they never ask, we need to forgive. We should memorize and repeat over and over: Forgiveness is about our attitude, not their action.
- **We don't always have to tell them we have forgiven them.** Self-righteously announcing our gracious forgiveness to someone who has not asked to be forgiven may be a manipulation to make them feel guilty. It also is a form of pride.
- **Withholding forgiveness is a refusal to let go of perceived power.** We can feel powerful when the offender is in need of forgiveness and only we can give it. We may fear going back to being powerless if we forgive.
- **Forgiveness does not mean forgetting.** It's normal for memories to be triggered in the future. When thoughts of past hurts occur, it's what we do with them that counts. When we find ourselves focusing on a past offense, we can learn to say, "Thank you, God, for this reminder of how important forgiveness is."
- **Forgiveness starts with a mental decision.** The emotional part of forgiveness is finally being able to let go of the resentment. Emotional healing may or may not follow quickly after we forgive.

- 7) Take a moment and read the above list as a group. Did any of these ideas come up as misconceptions? If so, which ones?
- 8) From the list above, which one is the hardest for you personally?
- 9) Are there any steps you need to take in regards to forgiveness this week?

Read the following verses:

Matthew 6:13

James 1:13-14 (ESV)

¹³ Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. ¹⁴ But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

1 Corinthians 10:13

¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

- 10) Do the verses in Matthew and James contradict one another?

The answer is, no, they don't. Matthew 6 is speaking about acknowledging our weakness and seeking God for the strength to move away from sin.

- 11) In light of the passage from James, what is Jesus referring to when He says, "lead us not into temptation" in Matthew 6:13?
- 12) From the 1 Corinthians passage, is there any temptation God cannot help us resist?
- 13) What practical steps can you take to put any of the ideas we have discussed today into practice?

CHAIR TIME TOOL

Over the last two weeks we have unpacked two thoughts. One, as a Christian, where should my foundation of a clear vision come from? The answer is the Bible. Two, we took a long, hard look at ourselves in the mirror and asked God and ourselves some tough questions. This week we are going to tackle the idea of priorities. What is first, and how do I keep first things first?

Read, pray, and reflect on the following questions:

Matthew 22:34-40

- 14) What is the greatest commandment?
- 15) Why is loving God the first commandment?
- 16) What happens to our lives when we get these two commandments out of order?
- 17) This week we are beginning the writing of our values that will in turn become a vision statement. We have discussed three areas during Chair Time: the Bible, introspection, and priorities. Using these three areas we will begin to craft our values. Below are mine.

Values for Justin Orr:

- 1) The Bible:
I want the Bible to be the only source of my values. I seek to know it and make it a part of my heart, to meditate on it and put it into action.
- 2) Introspection:
I will ask myself the hard questions like, "Am I the problem?" and when I am will address it. I will also seek out godly friends to help me in this process of growth.
- 3) Priorities:
I will seek God first and trust His plan for my life and praise Him in the storm. I will seek to love others as an outpouring of my time with Jesus.

ⁱ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#) (Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2016), Mt 6:9–13.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/divorce-and-infidelity/forgiveness-and-restoration/forgiveness-what-it-is-and-what-it-isnt>