

Small group leader Questions - The school of Prayer – Forgive us our debts

Pray for God's Spirit to help us understand God's Word

Opening Question: **How much is Confession a feature of our daily prayers and why is that the case?**

Hint: The fact that Jesus includes asking for forgiveness in his pattern of daily prayer, confession and asking for forgiveness should be a common place, daily large part of our prayer lives.

This might not be the case because of lack of understanding, pride, a blindness to our own sin or more focussed on how others have hurt us.

Sometimes it's a case of not being very reflective about our attitudes and behaviour and unaware of how we have hurt others.

In your own understanding, what is the difference between Confession and repentance?

Hint: repentance is something we do once when we first turn away from our old life of sin and turn to Christ, confession is when we ask for daily forgiveness once we have become Christians.

Read Passage - Matthew 6:9-15

V12a says Forgive us our debts....

Why do you think Jesus wants us to ask for daily forgiveness when we were forgiven by God when we first repented and came to Christ?

Hint – because we still sin daily and we are told to confess sin regularly to God

Why do you think Jesus uses the word “debts” to describe our acts of sin?

Hint – Sin means “missing the mark” of God's perfect standards. Each day we fail to reach God's standards in many ways and we accumulate a debt that needs forgiveness.

What examples of “debts” do we accumulate each day that need confession and forgiveness for?

Firstly against God? Disobedience, forgetting him, denying him etc etc

Secondly against others? Lying, stealing, unkindness, selfishness, slander, anger, etc etc

As we forgive others....v12b

What things that others have done might we struggle to forgive?

Betrayal, rejection, abuse, unkind words etc

In what different ways might we sin against others on a regular basis and not even realise?

What is the encouragement and motivation in v14 to forgive others?

If you forgive others, the lord will forgive you. Forgiveness from God is conditional on us forgiving others.

What is the warning that Jesus gives in v15 and why?

Hint - That if we do not forgive others, our heavenly father will not forgive us.

How does this conditional forgiveness fit with the repentance that we made when we first turned to Christ?

Hint – a daily habit of unconfessed sin and not asking for forgiveness may be a sign that we have never really repented in the first place?

It's certainly a warning sign that we should be not be presumptuous about our salvation

How does this passage speak to the person who says:

I can't be forgiven – my debts are too big?

The death of Jesus on the cross is sufficient to cover all our debts, we just need to confess our sin.

Read - Cross reference: 1 john 1:9

I don't need to confess as my God has already forgiven me

Read 1 john 1:8

I don't need to be forgiven as I am basically a good person

Read 1 john 1:10

Prayer:

Use 1 john 1:5-10 as a basis of prayer thanking God for his light, salvation and promise of forgiveness when we confess our sins and asking God to show us where we are sinning and to confess our sins.