

Prayer #5

Matthew 6:12; And write off our debts, just as we wrote off our debtors

1. What is the aim of such a prayer?
 - a. Christian living (ethics—fruit of ones' relationship God in society and daily-life)
 - b. Jesus expects such an **applied prayer** after they become Christ-followers
 - c. Such a prayer creates a spirit of forgiveness and purge vengeance—
 - d. This is unbecoming of a person or a counter cultural behavior (this does not happen naturally; only a believer can do it)
 - e. A mere recital of this prayer puts the believer in a big responsibility
2. This prayer is directed to the Father—"Our Father" (cf. verse 10)
 - a. This prayer for "forgiveness" is not "forgiveness" unto salvation
 - b. This prayer is done almost daily as a believer who has a relationship with the Father—prayer during the process of sanctification
 - i. Sanctification is the work of the Triune God on a Christ-follower through the means of a faith-family, the Scripture, and the Holy Spirit
 - ii. It is the process by which the Triune God brings transformation in the life of a believer unto the likeness of Jesus Christ
 - iii. Though many things happen during this process
 - c. In this journey, believers do offend the Father, who writes off their debts regularly
3. During his/her sanctification, God's writing off believers' debt is absolutely a must, but, interestingly, it is conditional
 - a. Believers need to first forgive their debtors
 - i. Matt 6:14-15¹
 - ii. Matt 18:21-35
 - iii. Mark 11:25²
 - b. Prayer life has horizontal implication before it becomes a vertical reality—Jesus expects His followers to do what they want from their Father
 - c. Those with spiritual humility "write off" or "forgive" willingly
 - d. They know that they transgress—the yardstick with which they write off the debts of their debtors needs to be the yardstick they use to ask forgiveness for their debts
 - e. On the other hand, spiritually arrogant believers become self-righteous and do not write off the debts of others—but they expect the Father to write off their debts!
 - f. In the horizontal forgiveness, the victim does not wait for the offender to come asking for forgiveness
 - g. There is a spiritual connection between forgiving and be forgiven
 - h. The horizontal forgiveness is unconditional but believers' asking for forgiveness precedes their forgiveness of their debtors—the former is unconditional, and the latter is conditional

"Write off our debts, just as we wrote off our debtors" (verse 12)

4. "Write off" or "Forgive"
 - a. "The victim's release of the offender from moral and legal obligations"
 - b. "To let go" or "to cancel," i.e., "to let go of retribution and revenge"
 - c. "To cover the other person's offenses"

¹ 6:14 "For if you forgive others their sins, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ^{6:15} But if you do not forgive others, your Father will not forgive you your sins

² Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven will also forgive you your sins

- d. “To not to hold the offense against the offender by not holding revengeful thoughts against him or her”
 - e. “If possible, replacing revengeful thoughts with love, compassion, and charity”
5. When you pray “Write off my debts,” you’re asking the Father to release you from the moral obligations of your debts”
6. Debt and debtor (verse 12)
- a. The term “debt” refers to an “obligation” or “indebtedness” in a moral sense
 - b. For a Christian, “debt” refers to a failure to live a life consistent with his/her relationship with God³
 - c. A believer’s failure to live up to his relationship with God makes him “a debtor” before God—the debtor owes God a compensation
 - d. A believer prays to the Father to “write off” the debts, because he/she cannot fulfill the moral obligation before God
 - e. The “writing off” of the moral obligations is necessary in the walk of sanctification
7. “Just as” (verse 12:b)
- a. It’s a comparative particle
 - b. It refers to something that preceded
8. “We also wrote (have written off) off our debtors” (verse 12:b)
- a. Prior to a Jesus-follower asks the Father for forgiveness, he/she does something which becomes a model or moral ground to make such a prayer
 - b. Only a believer can make such a prayer— he/she is not holding a debt against his/her debtor(s)
 - c. God’s forgiveness of Jesus-followers is not without reciprocity

TAKE AWAY

Ask the Father to write off your debts after you have done the same thing to your debtor

³ In later Judaism, the word “debt” referred to “sin” *ḥob* חוב. As we see in some translation, it does not mean: “breaking the law—transgression,” or “rebellion” (this translation is an influence Luke 11:4 where ἀμαρτία is used)