

Talking Points

Teach Us To Pray, Part 5

Coming Together

1. You're out to eat. The wait is long. The food is served lukewarm. The party of 25 across the room sucks up all of the waiter's attention. When they finally leave, however, the waiter returns to your table. Harried but more cheerful, he apologizes, refills your drinks, and recommends a dessert that turns out to be amazing. When he brings the bill, you notice that the dessert is marked "no charge," and the waiter has written, "Sorry!" The tip tonight is
 - a. 100% of the tip you usually leave.
 - b. A little less than full tip—Just a small protest to send a signal.
 - c. Much less than full tip—Yes, it got better, but you can't reward bad service, and the extra time means you'll have to pay the babysitter extra, so...
 - d. El Zippo—that'll teach 'em.
2. Describe how this past week went for you in terms of being more confident (or perhaps more consistent) about bringing even your most basic needs to God. Did you notice any changes in the way you pray?

Going Deeper

1. In Luke Chapter 15, Jesus tells another story about "the way of forgiveness" that permeates the Kingdom of God. Read Luke 15:11–32. What do you see in these verses that underscores the Father's passion to forgive the sins of His people? What encouragement do you find in this story told by Jesus 2000 years ago?
2. Imagine that you are one of the characters in the story Jesus told in Matthew 18:
 - The King
 - The servant who was forgiven the huge debt
 - The other servants who stood at a distance and watched the drama unfold.

Give your perspective on the events that unfolded.

3. What kind of hurts are the hardest for people to forgive? Why do you think they are so hard to let go of?
4. What are the effects on people when they hang on to resentment and withhold forgiveness?

Making It Real

1. Consider how the king forgave the servant: "You owe, I'll pay." What is the greatest mercy of your life from another person (at least so far)?
2. Describe a time when forgiveness was withheld from you. How did (or does) that affect you?
3. Describe a long-time or profound personal hurt you found—or are still finding—hard to forgive. What impacts (anger, bitterness, etc.) do you think this hurt has had on you?

Moving Forward

Let's help each other. This week, talk to your Life Group (or someone in your Life Group) about two things:

- 1) A hurt you're having a hard time forgiving but want to/need to forgive.
- 2) Ways you can help them (even if it's just by listening) with the issue of forgiveness.

Readings for Going Deeper

Luke 15:11-32 (New International Version)

¹¹ Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

¹³ "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

²⁸ "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

³¹ "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"