

A Clear Path to Intimacy

For if you forgive men when they sin against you , your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **—Matthew 6:14**

Not only do we need daily forgiveness as much as we need daily bread, but we also need to pray daily that we have the grace to forgive others as a lifelong commitment. It is not easy. No one ever said it would be. It has been the hardest thing I have ever had to do, but following this phrase in the Lord's Prayer is the clearest path to fellowship with God.

It is as though Jesus adds a "P.S." to the Lord's Prayer. It almost seems that that is why He gave us the prayer in the first place!

Why does Jesus add this further statement? He is demonstrating which of the petitions was the most important. The most natural tendency in the world is to want to get even when someone has offended you. It is as natural as eating or sleeping, and it is instinctual. Jesus is telling us to do something that is not natural but supernatural: totally forgiving people—sometimes those closest to us—for the wrongs they have done to us. I still struggle in this area myself. But when I truly and totally forgive, I have crossed over into the supernatural—and have achieved an accomplishment equal to any miracle.

The kingdom of heaven is the domain of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is at home in us, it means He is not grieved. He can be Himself; He isn't adjusting to us, but we are adjusting to Him. When Jesus said, "If you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you," He was not talking about how to achieve salvation. He was referring to receiving the anointing of God and participating in an intimate relationship with the Father. Unless we are walking in a state of forgiveness toward others,

we cannot be in an intimate relationship with God.

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