

MON 6-12

"If we claim, 'We don't have any sin,' we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from everything we've done wrong." [1 John 1:8-9, CEB] John knew we sometimes like to fool ourselves. Are you ignoring any inner convictions that you need to face honestly?

PRAY: Loving God, give me clarity about my strengths and my failings. Help me to remember my daily need for your forgiveness and teach me how to grow to be more like Christ. Amen.

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TUES 6-13

"And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins." [Hebrews 8:12, NLT] We can be our own worst critic, can't we? Sometimes we just need to meditate on this verse and let it sink deep into our souls. In Christ, we are forgiven!

PRAY: Merciful God, sometimes I still allow things you have forgiven me for to haunt me and influence my decisions. Remind me that you have removed my guilt and shame. Amen.

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WED 6-14

"Then Peter came to him and asked, 'Lord, how often should I forgive someone who sins against me? Seven times?' 'No, not seven times,' Jesus replied, 'but seventy times seven!'" [Matthew 18:21-22, NLT] When we consider the vast amount of grace we have been given, it isn't hard to imagine Jesus' expectations of his followers. Ask God daily to help you follow Jesus' example.

PRAY: God of grace, my mistakes are numerous yet you still forgive. Increase my ability to extend that same kindness when I am wronged. Teach me how to love like you. Amen.

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THURS 6-15

"The LORD is compassionate and merciful, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love." [Psalm 103:8, NLT] God offers us supreme patience because we are a work in progress. God will keep working on our hearts until our last day. Give thanks for the beauty of that loving process!

PRAY: Amazing God, help me to enjoy this faith journey. With all the ups and downs, I am so grateful that I can rest knowing you never give up on me. Amen.

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FRI 6-16

"Happy are people who make peace, because they will be called God's children." [Matthew 5:9, CEB] An integral part of being a peace maker is having a forgiving nature. When we dwell on past hurts, we can't fully experience peace in the present.

PRAY: Prince of Peace, instill in me a propensity for offering grace to others. As hard as it is at times, I know it is key to fully experiencing peace in my heart. Amen.

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SAT 6-17

"The LORD gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace." [Psalm 29:11, NIV] It is hard to demonstrate the humility required to do the hard work of forgiving others and seeking forgiveness. It takes God's strength working in us daily to experience true peace.

PRAY: Powerful God, move in my heart today. Uncover the relationships in my life that require more humility on my part. Only you can strengthen me to behave in a way that pleases you. Amen.

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Intro

The Lord's Prayer was a simple prayer that Jesus used to teach us the depths of God. We are learning to better understand it so it can become a meaningful part of our daily lives. This week we explore the importance of forgiveness.

Reflect

- As a child, did you learn that God is forgiving, harsh or angry, or nothing much about God at all? How has your understanding of God's forgiving nature changed?
- Read Psalm 103:1-12. The psalmist likely thought of the earth as a flat disk, so the imagery used from "east to west" was the greatest visible distance to describe how far removed our failures are with God's forgiveness.
 - Do you struggle to conceptualize this when it comes to your own greatest failures?
 - How has holding on to past mistakes impacted your life?
- Our human nature is to desire justice, and sometimes revenge feels like the fair thing to do. When you consider God's response of offering grace in the face of our wrongdoing, how does that influence your sense of what is fair when you are wronged?
- Our typical ways of relating to others are vastly different than the way God relates to us. Read Isaiah 55:6-9.
 - How does Isaiah's description of God's ways speak to your heart?
 - Sometimes Jesus' challenging teachings on forgiveness make us think, "Sounds nice--but that will never work." When you are reminded of the above Isaiah passage, what do you think is the key to being able to forgive as Jesus taught?
- If forgiveness weren't a huge part of God's kingdom, no fallible human would have any hope. Why do you suppose it is easier sometimes to feel we deserve that forgiveness, but someone who has hurt us does not?
- Think about the word *as* in the line "forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us." [Matthew 6:12, NLT] Why is that tiny word so weighty? When you consider the connection between forgiveness and forgiving, how do you feel?

Pray

God of mercy, help me to grow beyond both contempt for others and self-contempt. Show me how to live in the atmosphere of grace that abounds in your kingdom. Amen.

What did I learn?

How might it apply in my life?

What is a next step I can take?
