

The Family that Prays... // 5th Petition // 09.11.16

Have you noticed? It's HARD sometimes to let things go. As a child, you have a favorite stuffed animal. You can't let it go. Menard's angers you by only giving you store credit on your return. You can't let it go. A loved one is leaving, moving, dying, or has passed away. You can't let them go. A group of terrorists attack our nation with airplanes on 9/11/2001. You can't let it go. You have specific sin(s) you grip tight and keep control over your life. You can't let them go. A family member or friend has somehow wronged you and hurt you. You know you need to forgive, but you just don't know how to let it go.

Today, we continue our life lesson series, "The Family that Prays Together..." As you know, the conclusion is "Stays together!" In this series, we've been talking about how prayer, speaking to God in words and thoughts, is key to family! We've talked about how families must pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17), pray and never lose heart (Lk. 18:1), be constant in prayer (Rom. 12:12b), and pray about everything (Phil. 4:6). In fact, prayer is SO important, Jesus gave us the Lord's Prayer to help us. Today, let's look at The Fifth Petition which shows us the importance of letting go and the power of forgiveness!

The 5th Petition says, "Forgive us our trespasses (sins, debts, wrongs) as we forgive those who trespass (sin, debt, wrong) against us." What does this mean for our families? *Blue card.* Luther's Small Catechism says, "We pray in this petition that our Father in heaven would not look at our sins, or deny our prayer because of them. We are neither worthy of the things for which we pray, nor have we deserved them, but we ask that He would give them all to us by grace, for we daily sin much and surely deserve nothing but punishment. So we too will sincerely forgive and gladly do good to those who sin against us."

Here's the truth. We daily sin against God and others in thought, word, and deed, in acts of commission and omission. For which, we surely deserve nothing but God's present and eternal punishment! We live in a world where people say, "Pastor, talk to me about anything. But, don't talk to me about my sin!" Sin is the transgression of God's law. Sin is the total corruption of our whole human nature. On account of sin, we are by nature lost and condemned, ruined in body and soul. Romans 6:23a (NIV) says, "The wages of sin is death!" Do you believe this about yourself and your family? No? You should!

But, here's the Good News. Romans 6:23b (NIV) says, "The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." You see, in our sin, we simply can't stand before God. But, in Christ, there is forgiveness for our sin! Forgiveness means to let go, leave behind, dismiss, and cancel a debt. Jesus paid it all! He purchased us off the sin/slave market. He gave his life as a ransom for us (1 Tim. 2:6). He bore our sins on the cross so that we may die to sin and live for God. Thus, As Christians, we pray that for Christ's sake we may know the joy and peace of being forgiven! Our burden of sin is lifted. And, we are now set free!

But, there's more. We pray in this petition (GW), "Forgive us as we forgive others." We've all had people sin against us, desire to harm us, wrong us, and show us malice. But, when Peter asked Jesus (Matt. 18:21), "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him (Matt. 18:22), "Not seven times, but seventy seven times." This is an eternal, unlimited, God number! Thus, As Christians, we pray that for Christ's sake we may know the joy and peace of forgiving others! There's joy and peace for you/your family in being forgiven AND in forgiving others!

Let's pray. Lord, in the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us how to praise God, pray for His work in the world, pray for our daily needs, and pray for help in our daily struggles. Lord, in our families, help us pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Lord, do not look upon our sins, but graciously, for Christ's sake, forgive our sins. Help us know the joy and peace of being forgiven! And, Lord, help us know the joy and peace of forgiving others! Help us heartily forgive and readily do good to those who sin against us. Lord, today, help us forgive others in the same way You forgive us.

Amen