

# REALLY *forgiven?*

TEACH  
ME TO  
*pray*  
PART  
EIGHT





THE  
LORD'S  
*prayer*





Our Father in heaven,  
    may your name be kept holy.  
May your kingdom come soon.  
May your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today the food we need,  
**and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven  
those who sin against us.**

And don't let us yield to temptation,  
    but rescue us from the evil one.  
For yours is the kingdom and the power and  
    the glory forever.  
Amen.

*Matthew 6:9-13 - The New Living Translation*



*If the amount of space given to any part of the Lord's Prayer is an indication of what is most important to God, then the issue of forgiveness is most important. As the prayer finishes, Jesus repeats the call to forgiveness with the following words -*

*For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sin.  
Matthew 6:14-15*



# WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL ABOUT FORGIVENESS?

It is important to discover why our asking for forgiveness means so much to God. What have we done that needs forgiving anyway? The whole significance of prayer and Christianity will remain a mystery to us until we find the answer to this question. When we have found it, we may enter into a special relationship with God, and start a different kind of relationship with other people.

GET INVOLVED -

*List three things in your life for which you feel you need forgiveness.*



# THE SIN WORD!

If sin means nothing, forgiveness means nothing either.

This part of the *Lord's Prayer* introduces the concept of sin. When Jesus uses the word sin, it is often very different to the shallow or casual meanings most people attribute to it today. In order to fully understand what sin is, it will be helpful to reflect on the time when it first entered the world.

*Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, Did God really say, You must not eat from any tree in the garden? The woman said to the serpent, We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden, but God did say, You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die. You will not surely die, the serpent said to the woman. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.*

*Genesis 3:1-7*

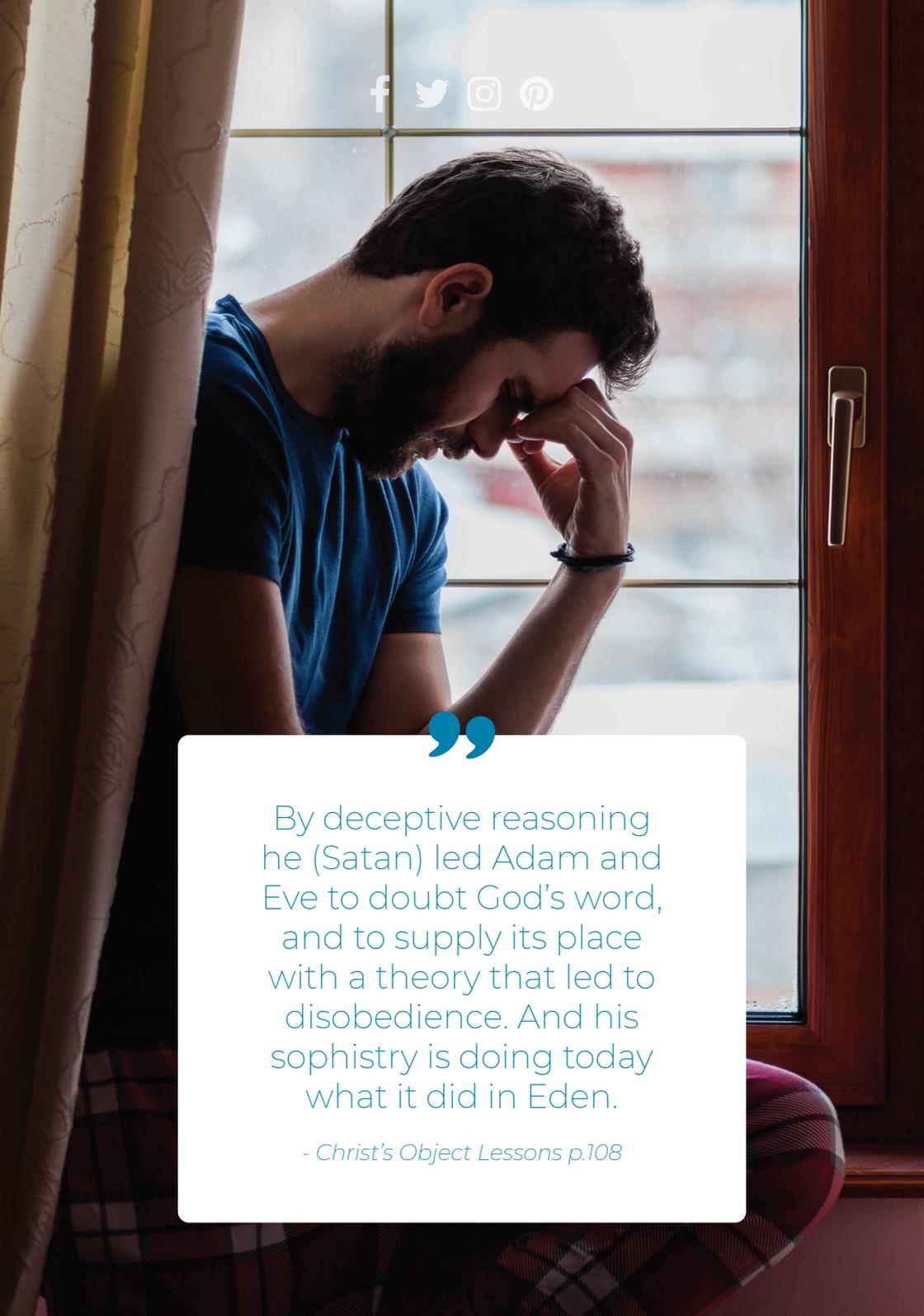
The *serpent* is a name given to Satan. (See Revelation 12:9) In previous booklets we have talked about him and the nature of his rebellion against God. He and his followers had been cast down to earth in order that the universe might see the complete outworking and consequences of his lies. God had warned Adam and Eve to keep clear of Satan, but the Bible describes how they foolishly fell victim to his lies. The first words that came out of Satan's mouth to them were - *Did God really say*

*those things?* He placed a doubt in their minds about the goodness and character of God. He was accusing God of lying when he had warned them that they would die if they ate from the forbidden tree. He inferred that God was deliberately withholding something from them - that if they actually ate the fruit they would experience what God selfishly wanted to keep for himself. The pair were faced with a dilemma. Whose word were they to trust – God's or Satan's?

### GET INVOLVED -

*Would you say it's wise to try something you have been warned about in order to discover whether it is really destructive or not?*



A man with a beard and dark hair, wearing a blue t-shirt, is sitting in a chair by a window. He is looking down with his right hand resting on his forehead, appearing thoughtful or distressed. The window behind him shows a blurred view of buildings outside. The room is dimly lit, with light coming from the window.

“  
By deceptive reasoning  
he (Satan) led Adam and  
Eve to doubt God’s word,  
and to supply its place  
with a theory that led to  
disobedience. And his  
sophistry is doing today  
what it did in Eden.

- *Christ's Object Lessons* p.108

# BREAKING TRUST BREAKS MUCH MORE

Trust is an issue that lies at the heart of every relationship. God had demonstrated his trustworthiness in the incredible world he had created for Adam and Eve. He had appointed them as its rulers. But in choosing to trust Satan's words, they aligned themselves with his rebellion. They chose to go it alone, and become independent from their Creator who loved them and had provided for their lives.

Distrusting God and his words lies at the foundation of sin. Distrust exists subtly in our minds and motives before it ever expresses itself in our behaviour. The distrust of Adam and Eve ultimately cost them their lives, even though God had issued his instructions for their safety. By taking the fruit and eating it they took sin to another level. There is no other term to describe this other than disobedience, and the Bible emphasises that our acts of rebellion against God and his laws are the consequences of the sin of distrust. (See 1 John 3:4) **Such individual sinful acts are an outward indication of an inner attitude that is bubbling away underneath our behaviours.**

## GET INVOLVED -

*Have you ever tried to force yourself to stop doing sinful things you felt guilty about? How did it make you feel?*

# THE DEEPEST LEVEL OF SIN

There is yet another level to sin revealed in this passage. The Bible says about Adam and Eve -

*The eyes of both of them were opened, and they realised they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Genesis 3:7*

As a result of Adam and Eve's distrust in God, and their disobedient behaviour that followed, their inner natures were seriously damaged.

The Bible describes how they experienced the emotion of fear for the first time. They lost a sense of transparent honesty with God and each other. They hid from him physically, and from their partner psychologically, by covering themselves. The man refused to accept responsibility for his own actions, and blamed the woman for the consequences that had come as a result of their disobedience. The woman acted in a similar way, blaming Satan for deceiving her. Sin had infected their inner nature. It had become a cancer permeating their whole being. It affected everything - their relationships, their behaviour and their inner being. (See Genesis 3:8-13)

Moreover, it became a transmitted thing that was passed down from generation to generation. It was like a genetic thing, embedded in our DNA. David knew this when he said -

*Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Psalm 51:5*

By this statement, he did not imply that he was illegitimate. He was saying that the power of sin had affected him since his conception.

# THE SIN EFFECT

This is the bad news! God tells us -

*For the wages of sin is death... Romans 6:23*

People started dying here on Earth from when Adam and Eve sinned against God through disobedience. The ultimate cause of death today is still the same.

## THE MIRROR

Sin by its very nature is deceptive. For that reason, if God did not open our eyes, we would never really understand what it is. But God has a mirror that we can look into, and it shows up sin.

*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it - he will be blessed in what he does. James 1:22-25*

God's perfect law of ten commandments is a transcript of his character. It reveals the great principles of God's government, and shows us how these principles are the foundation of how we relate to God and to each other. (See Exodus 20:1-17 for a copy of God's mirror)



## WHAT'S SO AMAZING ABOUT GRACE?

On the surface, this appears to leave us all in a hopeless situation. But here is the good news! If it were not for the fact that God's loving heart stepped in to rescue us, it would indeed have been hopeless.

Following his confrontation with Adam and Eve, God turned to Satan and said -

*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel. Genesis 3:15*

This is the first promise given in the Bible that one day a male descendant of Eve would eventually deal Satan a mortal wound for his rebellion, and be seriously injured in the process himself. It is an accurate portrayal of what Jesus did in his death on the cross and his following resurrection. (See Romans 16:20; Revelation 12:9-12)

GET INVOLVED -

*What do you understand God's grace to be?*





## THE HEART OF THE ISSUE OF FORGIVENESS

The terrible nature of sin and its magnitude lies at the very heart of why every human being needs forgiveness. We were not the original couple who distrusted God and his word, but we have certainly continued their independence and rebellion. Our self-centred behaviours have certainly hurt as many people as theirs. Our inner beings are just as infected with the cancer of sin as theirs. In essence, we're all involved in the tragic situation that led a loving God to deal with human rebellion in the way that he did.

## OUR BAR IS A LOT LOWER THAN GOD'S

The fact is that most of us don't evaluate our sinfulness the way God does. Most of us would not even understand that our human nature is sinful. We gauge our morality by comparing ourselves with each other. It seems our sinful acts are like minor slip-ups or indulgences in our own eyes.

It is not unusual when people first look in the mirror of God's law that they don't like what they see!! Some try and do away with the mirror as irrelevant. But that is impossible.

Sin is far deeper than we ever imagined. There is only one way to see the enormity of sin, and that is to see what it cost God. As Jesus died on the cross he cried out -

*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. Luke 23:34*

If our eyes were opened to the significance of this plea on our behalf, it would bring us to the place of recognising the full consequence of our independent life. It is at this moment that our self-sufficiency is broken, and God gives us a new way of looking at ourselves. **The penalty for sin has been paid. Forgiveness is now fully available simply for the asking.**

## ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

This realisation means nothing unless we also seek to make things right with the people we may have hurt. Jesus urges us to first ask forgiveness from anyone we have offended.

*Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar (Jews offered gifts at the altar in their temple to receive God's forgiveness for sin) and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5: 23-24  
(additional information supplied in brackets)*

For example - if we have been dishonest in business with someone, God requires us to go to that person, return what we have taken illegally, and ask for forgiveness. But the necessity of forgiveness goes deeper than this. God's forgiveness of us opens our eyes concerning the people who have also hurt us.

*So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:16, 19*

Every human being is infected with a sinful nature like us. They are in the same predicament that we are in, and can't help hurting us at some time. Our ability to offer others the same forgiveness that God has already offered us is the only evidence that we have truly grasped the depths of forgiveness.

## **A CLASSIC STORY ABOUT FORGIVING PEOPLE WHO HAVE HURT US**

Jesus once told a confronting story about a workman who owed an enormous debt to his boss that was impossible to repay. Facing a life of slavery for himself and his whole family, he begged for mercy, and was given total release from his debt. After leaving his boss, he met someone who owed him just a few dollars. He demanded full payment, and because the person could not pay he sent him to jail! But when his boss heard what he'd done, he cancelled his forgiveness and threw him into jail. (See Matthew 18:23-35)

This man showed that he didn't appreciate the size of his debt, or the generous forgiveness given by his boss. He put a low estimate on the size of his own debt, as well as not forgiving a fellow debtor who only owed him a small amount. Forgiveness is sometimes hard to accept. To forgive people enormous atrocities or deeply inflicted personal pain

is very difficult. It is even harder to forgive ourselves for some of the things we have done. The consequence of not forgiving, however, is even worse. It destines us to a life of bitterness, and keeps us in the grip of anger and resentment. We are forever bound to the one who has hurt us. There is only one way to deal with whoever may have hurt us. The key is in letting them go. Release them forever through the quiet decision to forgive.

In the *Lord's Prayer*, Jesus likens our sin to a debt, just as he did in the story. There is no chance of ever paying our debt back. The only way out is for us to gratefully accept the mercy and forgiveness offered to us, and in turn extend the same forgiveness to others.



## GET INVOLVED -

*When you are in need, do you struggle to accept something as a gift? Put yourself in the place of your helper and describe how they would feel if you tried to return their gift.*

The good news is - if we ask for forgiveness, God always gives it!

*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9*

What a wonderful God!

## MY PRAYER

Go back to Page 2 of this booklet and read the Lord's Prayer again, noting especially the forgiveness part. Do you want to make that your personal prayer too? Talk to God right now and claim the forgiveness he wants to give you -

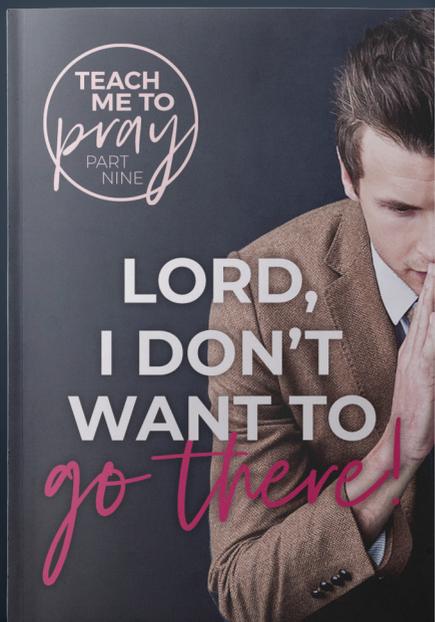


## MY PRAYER –

My Father in heaven, your name is holy, you are an awesome God.

Thank you for sending Jesus who died to pay the price for my sin.  
Father, please...





## PART 9: LORD, I DON'T WANT TO GO THERE!

In our life, we all face different temptations. Learn how God is waiting to help you triumph over the temptations you struggle with - all you need to do is ask.

Email or call Hope Channel to receive Part 9 of the Teach Me to Pray series to continue in your prayer journey.

### SHARING

If you have found this course helpful you can help share the message. Where ever you see the following social media symbols the digital content can be found at [hopechannel.com/inspire](https://hopechannel.com/inspire) for sharing:



- ✉ [discover@hopechannel.com](mailto:discover@hopechannel.com)
- 🌐 [hopechannel.com/learn](https://hopechannel.com/learn)
- 📘 [/hopedigital](https://www.facebook.com/hopedigital)
- 🐦 [@hopechannel](https://twitter.com/hopechannel)
- ☎ 1300 300 389 (AU)  
0800 694 673 (NZ)



Writer: Dr. Graeme Loftus  
Copyright © 2009 Hope Discovery Centre  
Published by: Hope Channel  
Scripture: Unless otherwise stated, taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION ®  
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society  
Design and Layout: Storysmiths