

**Heaven is for Real: The Father's Home Matthew 6:9-13** FBC Canton Sunday am  
October 5, 2025

**Introduction: The Father wants his children home with him. Psalm 116:15**  
Precious in the sight of the Lord /s the death of His saints.

God resides in a dwelling place that is designed for his children, we call it Heaven.

**There are 3 Heavens spoken of the scripture:**

1. Air we breathe=1<sup>st</sup> Heaven.
2. Stars, galaxies, planets=2<sup>nd</sup> Heaven.
3. God's Home=3<sup>rd</sup> Heaven.

NOTHING IS MORE OFTEN MISDIAGNOSED THAN OUR  
HOMESICKNESS FOR HEAVEN. WE THINK THAT WHAT WE  
WANT IS SEX, DRUGS, ALCOHOL, A NEW JOB, A RAISE, A  
DOCTORATE, A SPOUSE, A LARGE-SCREEN TELEVISION, A  
NEW CAR, A CABIN IN THE WOODS, A CONDO IN HAWAII.  
WHAT WE REALLY WANT IS THE PERSON WE WERE MADE  
FOR, JESUS, AND THE PLACE WE WERE MADE FOR, HEAVEN.  
NOTHING LESS CAN SATISFY US.

- RANDY ALCORN -

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Jesus taught us how to pray as his disciples and he began it with Our Father which is in Heaven.

I am praying for God to use this series to inspire us and teach us about the reality of Heaven, how to go there, and what only believers will experience there.

**I. Where God dwells is all we ever longed for. V. 9-13, Revelation 21**

There will be no more:

Pain, sorrow, dying, death...for the curse of sin is gone.

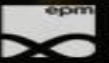
There will be new.

God will wipe away every tear from regret for those who should have served more fully.

# *Heaven is God's home.*

How could the dwelling place of the One  
who possesses infinite creativity,  
goodness, beauty and power  
be anything less than thrilling?

R A N D Y A L C O R N



**a. Holiness is required to enter. V. 9, Hebrews 12:14**

14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord.

**b. His kingdom is coming to the Earth. V. 10, Hebrews 12:28**

## **Hebrews**

Therefore, since we are receiving a  
kingdom which cannot be shaken,  
let us have grace, by which we may  
serve God acceptably with reverence  
and godly fear. For our God is a  
consuming fire.

**12:28-29**



**1. When the King's Kingdom is here:**

**a. All Creation will be different. Isaiah 11:6-9**

"The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,  
The leopard shall lie down with the young goat,  
The calf and the young lion and the fatling together;  
And a little child shall lead them.

<sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze;

Their young ones shall lie down together;

And the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

<sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole,

And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den.

<sup>9</sup> They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD

As the waters cover the sea.

**b. All morality will be different.**

i. The meek shall inherit the Earth.

**c. His will is done in Heaven better than how it is done on Earth. V. 10**

i. 3 reasons his will is not done on the Earth now: Genesis 3

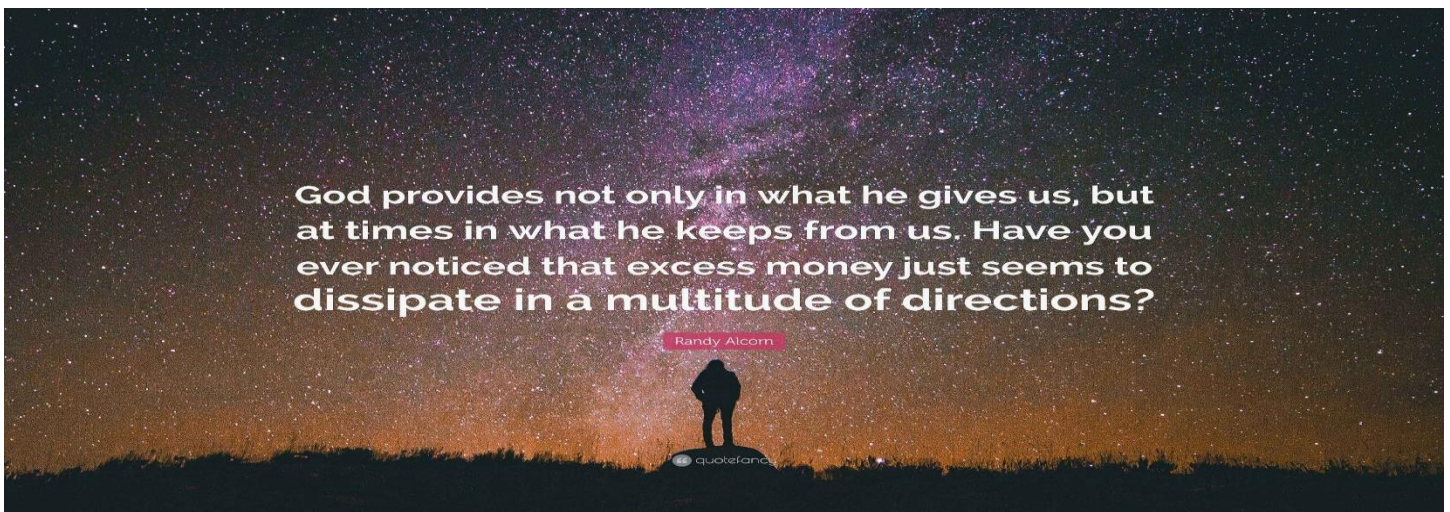
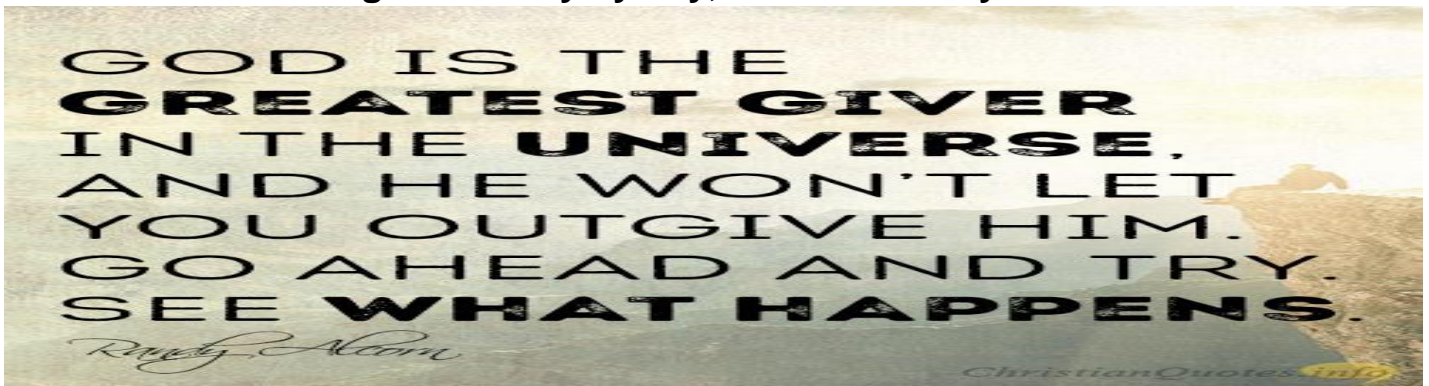
1. Fallen Enemy.

2. Fallen World.

3. Fallen Flesh.

**d. God is the greatest giver. V. 11**

i. His gifts are day by day, not before they are needed.



**e. "I Forgive Him," because God forgave me. V. 12**

i. There will be no more unforgiveness and bitterness in Heaven.

**f. There is evil on Earth, but not in Heaven. V. 13, I Corinthians 10:13**

<sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.

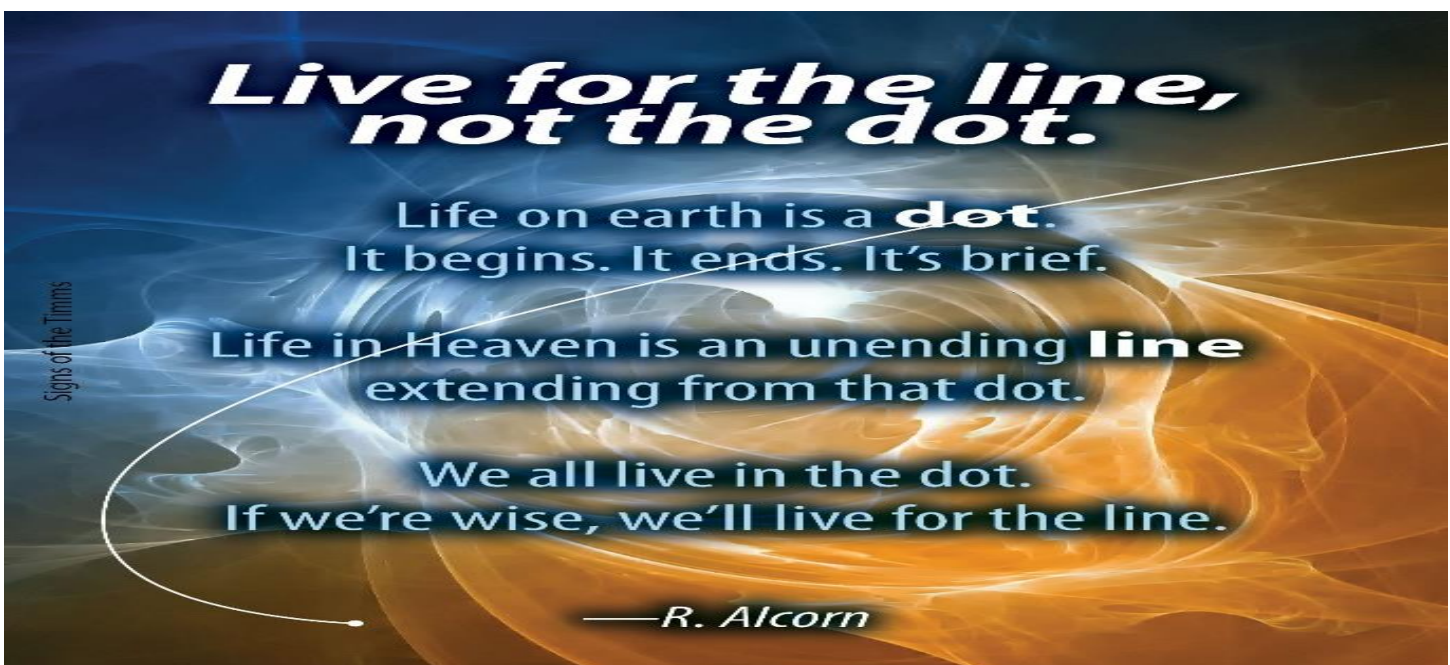
i. God will deliver us here, and will deliver us to Heaven.

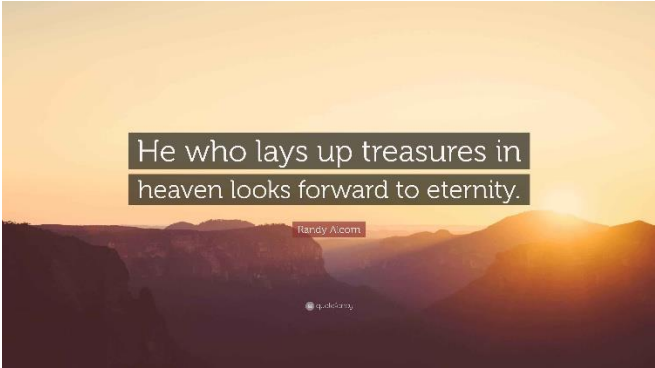


**g. Forever is a very long time to be wrong. V. 13, Isaiah 9:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. <sup>7</sup> Of the increase of *His* government and peace *There will be* no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

**Conclusion: Live for the line, not the dot. Colossians 3:1-5**

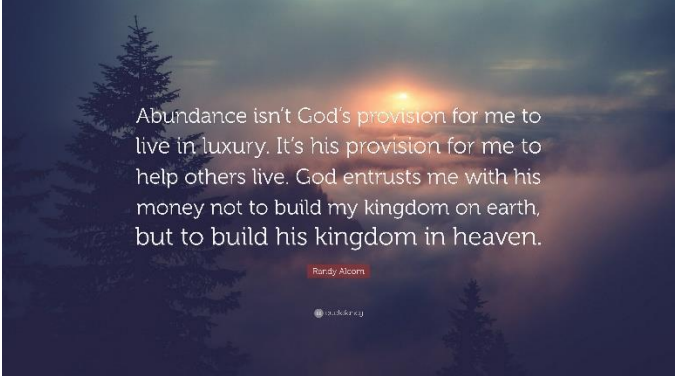




He who lays up treasures in  
heaven looks forward to eternity.

Randy Alcorn

@randyalcorn



Abundance isn't God's provision for me to  
live in luxury. It's his provision for me to  
help others live. God entrusts me with his  
money not to build my kingdom on earth,  
but to build his kingdom in heaven.

Randy Alcorn

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## Jamieson, Fausset & Brown Commentary on Matthew 6

**The Gospel According to Matthew**  
**Commentary by DAVID BROWN**  
**CHAPTER 6**

SERMON ON THE MOUNT--*continued.*

Mat 6:1-18. FURTHER ILLUSTRATION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE KINGDOM--ITS  
UNOSTENTATIOUSNESS.

*General Caution against Ostentation in Religious Duties* ( [Mat 6:1](#) ).

**1. Take heed that ye do not your alms**--But the true reading seems clearly to be "your righteousness." The external authority for both readings is pretty nearly equal; but internal evidence is decidedly in favor of "righteousness." The subject of the second verse being "almsgiving" that word--so like the other in [Greek](#)--might easily be substituted for it by the copyist: whereas the opposite would not be so likely. But it is still more in favor of "righteousness," that if we so read the first verse, it then becomes a general heading for this whole section of the discourse, inculcating unostentatiousness in [all](#) deeds of righteousness--Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting being, in that case, but selected examples of this righteousness; whereas, if we read, "Do not your [alms](#)," &c., this first verse will have no reference but to that one point. By "righteousness," in this case, we are to understand that same righteousness of the kingdom of heaven, whose leading features--in opposition to traditional perversions of it--it is the great object of this discourse to open up: that righteousness of which the Lord says, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" ( [Mat 5:20](#) ). To "[do](#)" this righteousness, was an old and well-understood expression. Thus, "Blessed is he that doeth righteousness at all times" ( [Psa 106:3](#) ). It refers to the [actings](#) of righteousness in the life--the outgoings of the gracious nature--of which our Lord afterwards said to His disciples, "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples" ( [Jhn 15:8](#) ).

**before men, to be seen of them**--with the view or intention of being beheld of them. See the same expression in [Mat 5:28](#). True, He had required them to let their light so shine before men that they might see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven ( [Mat 5:16](#) ). But this is quite consistent with not making a display of our righteousness for self-glorification. In fact, the doing of the former necessarily implies our [not](#) doing the latter.

**otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven**--When all duty is done to God--as primarily enjoining and finally judging of it--He will take care that it be duly recognized; but when done purely for ostentation, God cannot own it, nor is His judgment of it even thought of--God accepts only what is done to Himself. So much for the general principle. Now follow three illustrations of it.

*Almsgiving* ( [Mat 6:2-4](#) ).

**2. Therefore, when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee**--The expression is to be taken figuratively for [blazoning](#) it. Hence our expression to "trumpet."

**as the hypocrites do**--This word--of such frequent occurrence in Scripture, signifying primarily "one who acts a part"--denotes one who either [pretends](#) to be what he is not (as here), or [dissembles](#) what he really is (as in [Luk 12:1, 2](#) ).

**in the synagogues and in the streets**--the places of religious and secular resort.

**that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you**--In such august expressions, it is the

Lawgiver and Judge Himself that we hear speaking to us.

**They have their reward**--All they wanted was human applause, and they have it--and with it, all they will ever get.

**3. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth**--So far from making a display of it, dwell not on it even in thine own thoughts, lest it minister to spiritual pride.

**4. That thine alms may be in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret *himself* shall reward thee openly**--The word "Himself" appears to be an unauthorized addition to the text, which the sense no doubt suggested. (See [1Ti 5:25](#) [Rom 2:16](#) [1Cr 4:5](#) ).

*Prayer* ( [Mat 6:5, 6](#) ).

**5. And when thou prayest, thou shalt**--or, preferably, "when ye pray ye shall."  
**not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets**--(See on JF & B for [Mt 6:2](#) ).

**that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have,** &c.--The *standing* posture in prayer was the ancient practice, alike in the Jewish and in the early Christian Church. But of course this conspicuous posture opened the way for the ostentatious.

**6. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet**--a place of retirement.  
**and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly**--Of course, it is not the simple publicity of prayer which is here condemned. It may be offered in any circumstances, however open, if not prompted by the spirit of ostentation, but dictated by the great ends of prayer itself. It is the *retiring* character of true prayer which is here taught.

*Supplementary Directions and Model Prayer* ( [Mat 6:7-15](#) ).

**7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions**--"Babble not" would be a better rendering, both for the form of the word--which in both languages is intended to imitate the sound--and for the sense, which expresses not so much the repetition of the same words as a senseless multiplication of them; as appears from what follows.

**as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking**--This method of heathen devotion is still observed by Hindu and Mohammedan devotees. With the Jews, says LIGHTFOOT, it was a maxim, that "Every one who multiplies prayer is heard." In the Church of Rome, not only is it carried to a shameless extent, but, as THOLUCK justly observes, the very prayer which our Lord gave as an antidote to vain repetitions is the most abused to this superstitious end; the number of times it is repeated counting for so much more merit. Is not this just that characteristic feature of heathen devotion which our Lord here condemns? But praying much, and using at times the same words, is *not* here condemned, and has the example of our Lord Himself in its favor.

**8. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him**--and so needs not to be *informed* of our wants, any more than to be *roused* to attend to them by our incessant speaking. What a view of God is here given, in sharp contrast with

the gods of the heathen! But let it be carefully noted that it is not as *the general Father of mankind* that our Lord says, "Your Father" knoweth what ye need before ye ask it; for it is not men, as such, that He is addressing in this discourse, but His own disciples--the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, hungry and thirsty souls, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, who allow themselves to have all manner of evil said against them for the Son of man's sake--in short, the new-born children of God, who, making their Father's interests their own, are here assured that their Father, in return, makes their interests His, and needs neither to be told nor to be reminded of their wants. Yet He will have His children pray to Him, and links all His promised supplies to their petitions for them; thus encouraging us to draw near and keep near to Him, to talk and walk with Him, to open our every case to Him, and assure ourselves that thus asking we shall receive--thus seeking we shall find--thus knocking it shall be opened to us.

**9. After this manner**--more simply "Thus."

**therefore pray ye**--The "ye" is emphatic here, in contrast with the heathen prayers. That this matchless prayer was given not only as a *model*, but as a *form*, might be concluded from its very nature. Did it consist only of hints or directions for prayer, it could only be used as a directory; but seeing it is an actual prayer--designed, indeed, to show how much real prayer could be compressed into the fewest words, but still, as a prayer, only the more incomparable for that--it is strange that there should be a doubt whether we ought to pray that very prayer. Surely the words with which it is introduced, in the second utterance and varied form of it which we have in [Luk 11:2](#), ought to set this at rest: "When ye pray, *say*, Our Father." Nevertheless, since the second form of it varies considerably from the first, and since no example of its actual use, or express quotation of its phraseology, occurs in the sequel of the New Testament, we are to guard against a superstitious use of it. How early this began to appear in the church services, and to what extent it was afterwards carried, is known to every one versed in Church History. Nor has the spirit which bred this abuse quite departed from some branches of the Protestant Church, though the opposite and equally condemnable extreme is to be found in other branches of it.

*Model Prayer* ( [Mat 6:9-13](#) ). According to the Latin fathers and the Lutheran Church, the petitions of the Lord's Prayer are *seven* in number; according to the Greek fathers, the Reformed Church and the Westminster divines, they are only *six*; the two last being regarded--we think, less correctly--as one. The first three petitions have to do exclusively with God: "*Thy* name be hallowed"--"*Thy* kingdom come"--"*Thy* will be done." And they occur in a *descending* scale--from Himself down to the manifestation of Himself in His kingdom; and from His kingdom to the entire subjection of its subjects, or the complete doing of His will. The remaining four petitions have to do with OURSELVES: "Give *us* our daily bread"--"Forgive *us* our debts"--"Lead *us* not into temptation"--"Deliver *us* from evil." But these latter petitions occur in an *ascending* scale--from the bodily wants of every day up to our final deliverance from all evil.

### Invocation:

**Our Father which art in heaven**--In the former clause we express His nearness to us; in the latter, His distance from us. (See [Ecc 5:2](#) [Isa 66:1](#)). Holy, loving familiarity suggests the one; awful reverence the other. In calling Him "Father" we express a relationship we have all known and felt surrounding us even from our infancy; but in calling Him our Father "who art in heaven," we contrast Him with the fathers we all have here below, and so raise our souls to that "heaven" where He dwells, and that Majesty and Glory which are there as in their proper home. These first words of the Lord's Prayer--this invocation with which it opens--what a brightness and warmth does it throw over the whole prayer, and into what a serene region does it introduce the praying believer, the child of God, as he thus approaches Him! It is true that the paternal relationship of God to His people is by no means strange to the Old Testament. (See [Deu 32:6](#) [Psa 103:13](#) [Isa 63:16](#) [Jer 3:4, 19](#) [Mal 1:6](#) [2:10](#)). But these are only glimpses--the "back parts" ( [Exd 33:23](#) ), if we may so say, in comparison with the "open face" of our Father revealed in Jesus. (See on JF & B for [2Co 3:18](#)). Nor is it too much to say, that the view which our Lord gives, throughout this His very first lengthened discourse, of "our Father in heaven," beggars all that was ever taught, even in God's own Word, or conceived before by His saints, on this subject.

### First Petition:

**Hallowed be**--that is, "Be held in reverence"; regarded and treated as holy.

**thy name**--God's name means "Himself as revealed and manifested." Everywhere in Scripture God defines and marks off the faith and love and reverence and obedience He will have from men by the disclosures which He makes to them of what He is; both to shut out false conceptions of Him, and to make all their devotion take the shape and hue of His own teaching. Too much attention cannot be paid to this.

### Second Petition:

**10. Thy kingdom come**--The kingdom of God is that moral and spiritual kingdom which the God of grace is setting up in this fallen world, whose subjects consist of as many as have been brought into hearty subjection to His gracious scepter, and of which His Son Jesus is the glorious Head. In the inward reality of it, this kingdom existed ever since there were men who "walked with God" ( [Gen 5:24](#) ), and "waited for His salvation" ( [Gen 49:18](#) ); who were "continually with Him, holden by His right hand" ( [Psa 73:23](#) ), and who, even in the valley of the shadow of death, feared no evil when He was with them ( [Psa 23:4](#) ). When Messiah Himself appeared, it was, as a visible kingdom, "at hand." His death laid the deep foundations of it. His ascension on high, "leading captivity captive and receiving gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious, that the Lord God might dwell among them," and the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, by which those gifts for men descended upon the rebellious, and the Lord God was beheld, in the persons of thousands upon thousands, "dwelling" among men--was a glorious "coming" of this kingdom. But it is still to come, and this petition, "Thy kingdom come," must not cease to ascend so long as one subject of it remains to be brought in. But does not this prayer

stretch further forward--to "the glory to be revealed," or that stage of the kingdom called "the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" ( [2Pe 1:11](#) )? Not directly, perhaps, since the petition that follows this--"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven"--would then bring us back to this present state of imperfection. Still, the mind refuses to be so bounded by stages and degrees, and in the act of praying, "Thy kingdom come," it irresistibly stretches the wings of its faith, and longing, and joyous expectation out to the final and glorious consummation of the kingdom of God.

#### Third Petition.

**Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven**--or, as the same words are rendered in Luke, "as in heaven, so upon earth" ( [Luk 11:2](#) ) --as [cheerfully](#), as [constantly](#), as [perfectly](#). But some will ask, Will this ever be? We answer, If the "new heavens and new earth" are to be just our present material system purified by fire and transfigured, of course it will. But we incline to think that the aspiration which we are taught in this beautiful petition to breathe forth has no direct reference to any such [organic](#) fulfilment, and is only the spontaneous and resistless longing of the renewed soul--put into words--to see the whole inhabited earth in entire conformity to the will of God. It asks not if ever it shall be--or if ever it can be--in order to pray this prayer. It [must](#) have its holy yearnings breathed forth, and this is just the bold yet simple expression of them. Nor is the Old Testament without prayers which come very near to this ( [Psa 7:9](#) [67:1-7](#) [72:19](#), &c.).

#### Fourth Petition.

**11. Give us this day our daily bread**--The compound word here rendered "daily" occurs nowhere else, either in classical or sacred [Greek](#), and so must be interpreted by the analogy of its component parts. But on this critics are divided. To those who would understand it to mean, "Give us this day the bread of to-morrow"--as if the sense thus slid into that of Luke "Give us [day by day](#)" ( [Luk 11:2](#), as BENGEL, MEYER, &c.) it may be answered that the sense thus brought out is scarcely intelligible, if not something less; that the expression "bread of to-morrow" is not at all the same as bread "from day to day," and that, so understood, it would seem to contradict [Mat 6:34](#). The great majority of the best critics (taking the word to be compounded of [ousia](#), "[substance](#)," or "being") understand by it the "staff of [life](#)," the bread of [subsistence](#), and so the sense will be, "Give us this day the bread which this day's necessities require." In this case, the rendering of our authorized version (after the [Vulgate](#), LUTHER and some of the best modern critics)--"our daily bread"--is, in sense, accurate enough. (See [Pro 30:8](#) ). Among commentators, there was early shown an inclination to understand this as a prayer for the heavenly bread, or spiritual nourishment; and in this they have been followed by many superior expositors, even down to our own times. But as this is quite unnatural, so it deprives the Christian of one of the sweetest of his privileges--to cast his bodily wants in this short prayer, by one simple petition, upon his heavenly Father. No doubt the spiritual mind will, from "the meat that perisheth," naturally rise in thought to "that meat which endureth to everlasting life." But let it be enough that the petition about bodily wants irresistibly [suggests](#) a higher petition; and let us not rob ourselves--out of a morbid spirituality--of our one petition in this prayer for

that bodily provision which the immediate sequel of this discourse shows that our heavenly Father has so much at heart. In limiting our petitions, however, to provision for the day, what a spirit of childlike dependence does the Lord both demand and beget!

*Fifth Petition:*

**12. And forgive us our debts**--A vitally important view of sin, this--as an offense against God demanding reparation to His dishonored claims upon our absolute subjection. As the debtor in the creditor's hand, so is the sinner in the hands of God. This idea of sin had indeed come up before in this discourse--in the warning to agree with our adversary quickly, in case of sentence being passed upon us, adjudging us to payment of the last farthing, and to imprisonment till then ( [Mat 5:25, 26](#) ). And it comes up once and again in our Lord's subsequent teaching--as in the parable of the creditor and his two debtors ( [Luk 7:41](#), &c.), and in the parable of the unmerciful debtor ( [Mat 18:23](#), &c.). But by embodying it in this brief model of acceptable prayer, and as the first of three petitions more or less bearing upon sin, our Lord teaches us, in the most emphatic manner conceivable, to regard this view of sin as the primary and fundamental one. Answering to this is the "forgiveness" which it directs us to seek--not the removal from our own hearts of the stain of sin, nor yet the removal of our just dread of God's anger, or of unworthy suspicions of His love, which is all that some tell us we have to care about--but the removal from God's own mind of His displeasure against us on account of sin, or, to retain the figure, the wiping or crossing out from His "book of remembrance" of all entries against us on this account.

**as we forgive our debtors**--the same view of sin as before; only now transferred to the region of offenses given and received between man and man. After what has been said on [Mat 5:7](#), it will not be thought that our Lord here teaches that our exercise of forgiveness towards our offending fellow men absolutely precedes and is the proper ground of God's forgiveness of us. His whole teaching, indeed--as of all Scripture--is the reverse of this. But as no one can reasonably imagine himself to be the object of divine forgiveness who is deliberately and habitually unforgiving towards his fellow men, so it is a beautiful provision to make our right to ask and expect daily forgiveness of our daily shortcomings and our final absolution and acquittal at the great day of admission into the kingdom, dependent upon our consciousness of a forgiving disposition towards our fellows, and our preparedness to protest before the Searcher of hearts that we do actually forgive them. (See [Mar 11:25, 26](#) ). God sees His own image reflected in His forgiving children; but to ask God for what we ourselves refuse to men, is to insult Him. So much stress does our Lord put upon this, that immediately after the close of this prayer, it is the one point in it which He comes back upon ( [Mat 6:14, 15](#) ), for the purpose of solemnly assuring us that the divine procedure in this matter of forgiveness will be exactly what our own is.

*Sixth Petition:*

**13. And lead us not into temptation**--He who honestly seeks and has the assurance of, forgiveness for past sin, will strive to avoid committing it for the future. But conscious that "when we

would do good evil is present with us," we are taught to offer this sixth petition, which comes naturally close upon the preceding, and flows, indeed, instinctively from it in the hearts of all earnest Christians. There is some difficulty in the form of the petition, as it is certain that God does bring His people--as He did Abraham, and Christ Himself--into circumstances both fitted and designed to try them, or test the strength of their faith. Some meet this by regarding the petition as simply an humble expression of self-distrust and instinctive shrinking from danger; but this seems too weak. Others take it as a prayer against yielding to temptation, and so equivalent to a prayer for support and deliverance when we are tempted; but this seems to go beyond the precise thing intended. We incline to take it as a prayer against being drawn or sucked, of our own will, into temptation, to which the word here used seems to lend some countenance--"Introduce us not." This view, while it does not put into our mouths a prayer against being tempted--which is more than the divine procedure would seem to warrant--does not, on the other hand, change the sense of the petition into one for support under temptation, which the words will hardly bear; but it gives us a subject for prayer, in regard to temptation, most definite, and of all others most needful. It was precisely this which Peter needed to ask, but did not ask, when--of his own accord, and in spite of difficulties--he pressed for entrance into the palace hall of the high priest, and where, once sucked into the scene and atmosphere of temptation, he fell so foully. And if so, does it not seem pretty clear that this was exactly what our Lord meant His disciples to pray against when He said in the garden--"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation"? ( [Mat 26:41](#) ).

#### Seventh Petition:

**But deliver us from evil**--We can see no good reason for regarding this as but the second half of the sixth petition. With far better ground might the second and third petitions be regarded as one. The "but" connecting the two petitions is an insufficient reason for regarding them as one, though enough to show that the one thought naturally follows close upon the other. As the expression "from evil" may be equally well rendered "from the evil one," a number or superior critics think the devil is intended, especially from its following close upon the subject of "temptation." But the comprehensive character of these brief petitions, and the place which this one occupies, as that on which all our desires die away, seems to us against so contracted a view of it. Nor can there be a reasonable doubt that the apostle, in some of the last sentences which he penned before he was brought forth to suffer for his Lord, alludes to this very petition in the language of calm assurance--"And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work (compare the Greek of the two passages), and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom" ( [2Ti 4:18](#) ). The final petition, then, is only rightly grasped when regarded as a prayer for deliverance from all evil of whatever kind--not only from sin, but from all its consequences--fully and finally. Fitley, then, are our prayers ended with this. For what can we desire which this does not carry with it?

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen**--If any reliance is to be placed on external evidence, this doxology, we think, can hardly be considered part of the original

text. It is wanting in all the most ancient manuscripts; it is wanting in the *Old Latin* version and in the *Vulgate*; the former mounting up to about the middle of the second century, and the latter being a revision of it in the fourth century by JEROME, a most reverential and conservative as well as able and impartial critic. As might be expected from this, it is passed by in silence by the earliest Latin fathers; but even the Greek commentators, when expounding this prayer, pass by the doxology. On the other hand, it is found in a majority of manuscripts, though not the oldest; it is found in all the *Syriac* versions, even the *Peschito*--dating probably as early as the second century--although this version lacks the "Amen," which the doxology, if genuine, could hardly have wanted; it is found in the *Sahidic* or *Thebaic* version made for the Christians of Upper Egypt, possibly as early as the *Old Latin*; and it is found in perhaps most of the later versions. On a review of the evidence, the strong probability, we think, is that it was no part of the original text.

## Matthew Henry Commentary on Matthew 6

### Chapter 6

Christ having, in the former chapter, armed his disciples against the corrupt doctrines and opinions of the scribes and Pharisees, especially in their expositions of the law (that was called their leaven, [ch. 16:12](#)), comes in this chapter to warn them against their corrupt practices, against the two sins which, though in their doctrine they did not justify, yet in their conversation they were notoriously guilty of, and so as even to recommend them to their admirers: these were hypocrisy and worldly-mindedness, sins which, of all others, the professors of religion need most to guard against, as sins that most easily beset those who have escaped the grosser pollutions that are in the world through lust, and which are therefore highly dangerous. We are here cautioned,

- I. Against hypocrisy; we must not be as the hypocrites are, nor do as the hypocrites do.
  - 1. In the giving of alms ([v. 1-4](#)).
  - 2. In prayer ([v. 5-8](#)). We are here taught what to pray for, and how to pray ([v. 9-13](#)); and to forgive in prayer ([v. 14, 15](#)).
  - 3. In fasting ([v. 16-18](#)).
- II. Against worldly-mindedness,
  - 1. In our choice, which is the destroying sin of hypocrites ([v. 19-24](#)).
  - 2. In our cares, which is the disquieting sin of many good Christians ([v. 25-34](#)).

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Verse by Verse Study on Matthew 6 (C2000)

Tonight let's take a look at Matthew, chapter six. We are in the section of the book of Matthew that is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount because it was delivered to the disciples of Jesus on the mountainside there above the Sea of Galilee. "Seeing the multitudes, he went into a mountain: and he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth and he taught them, saying," ([Mat 5:1-2](#)).

So the first thing we note is that this Sermon on the Mount is not for general world consumption. It is not a system of laws and all that the world should inaugurate or can inaugurate. The Sermon on the Mount is to the disciples of Jesus Christ, and it is only those who have been described in the first part of the sermon that can really put these things into practice and that only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And so there is, first of all, a description of the person of which Jesus is speaking and that description comes in the form of the Beatitudes as Jesus describes the person to whom the sermon is applicable: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, Blessed are they that mourn, Blessed are the meek, Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, Blessed are the merciful, Blessed are the pure in heart, Blessed are the peacemakers" ([Mat 5:3-9](#)). These are the children of God. These are the disciples of Jesus Christ. These are the characteristics of the disciples of Jesus Christ.

And then Jesus tells them what the reaction of the world will be towards them. And that is of persecution, not understanding them, reviling them, saying of all manner of evil against them falsely. But their response to the world's reviling is to be rejoicing and to be exceeding glad. And then he tells them the effect that they are to have upon the earth; ye are the salt or the preserving influence in a corrupting society. You are the light in the darkness. You are the light of the world. You are the salt of the earth.

And then Jesus gets into an area that surely was mind-boggling to each of the disciples as he begins to talk to them concerning the law and it's relationship to the believer. And he declares to them that he did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill the law. But then that mind-boggling statement when Jesus said to his disciples, "Except your righteousness exceed that of the scribes and the Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven." ([Mat 5:20](#)) The scribes and the Pharisees spent their entire life trying to keep every little part of the law. And so to have Jesus make this kind of a statement, immediately the first reaction I could be would just be that of giving up. Well that's it. I've had it. There's no sense trying to go any further. There's no way I can be more righteous than the scribes and Pharisees.

And then Jesus went on to explain what he meant, for he began to give them five illustrations of the law as it was being taught and practiced by the scribes and the Pharisees. And he contrasted that with the law as it was intended when it was first given by God.

And the basic difference between the way the law was being practiced and taught by the Pharisees, and the way the law was intended by God in each case was that the Pharisees were teaching and practicing the law in a strict outward observance. They were keeping the law from an outward aspect but the way God intended was spiritual and not understand the law to be spiritual and governing my spirit, my attitude. They developed a whole wrong reaction to the law. As they looked at the law and their outward fulfillment of the requirements of the law, they felt very self-satisfied, very self-righteous and very proud and judgmental against all other men.

Jesus aptly described the attitude of the Pharisee when he said the Pharisee went into the temple to pray and he said, "Oh God, I thank you that I'm not like other men. I'm not an extortioner or I'm a blasphemer but I pay my tithes and I do this and I do that" ([Luke 18:11](#)). And he is perfectly describing the attitude that the Pharisee had as far as the law was concerned; the very smug, self-righteous attitude. But the law was not given by God to make men smug and self-righteous. The law was given by God to reveal to man the exceeding sinfulness of sin and to make the whole world guilty before God.

So their interpreting of the law was totally wrong and it was creating a completely wrong reaction on their part to the law. Rather than to make them feel guilty sinners before God and cry out "Oh God have mercy on me a sinner," because of the way they interpreted it they were able to fulfill the law. But the law being spiritual, though they may have fulfilled the outer or outward aspects, yet the spiritual aspects they had totally disobeyed.

So in the contrast that Jesus was giving, the way that the law was being taught; "You heard that it hath been said Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever kills is in danger of judgement: But I say unto you, whosoever hates his brother" ([Mat 5:22](#)). You see, it's the hatred from which murder comes. And you can be guilty of the law, "thou shalt not murder" if you have hatred in your heart against your brother. If you consider your brother a worthless fellow you've destroyed him in your own mind. He's worth nothing, you know, but your mind violated the law "thou shalt not murder".

"Thou shalt not commit adultery". Well, Jesus said look that isn't just the physical act. If you're looking at a woman and you desire her, then you've committed adultery already in your heart. The law was intended to make us guilty before God.

And as Paul the apostle said you know there was a time when he thought that, as far as the law was concerned he was perfect, he wrote to the Philippians and he said, "Concerning the righteousness which is the law" ([Philippians 3:6](#)). Man I had it, I had it made. But writing to the Romans he said, "I did not know that to desire or to covet was wrong except the law said, Thou shalt not covet" ([Romans 7:7](#)). So when I came to the realization that the law was governing the desires, hey, sin revived and I died. In other words, it killed me. It condemned me to death. I was guilty. Now he thought he wasn't guilty for so long but when he realized that the law was spiritual and I am carnal, hey I have failed.

And that's basically what Jesus is showing, is that the law is spiritual. And thus man cannot and has not fulfilled the law of God, and thus your righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees if you're gonna enter the kingdom of heaven. But how can your righteousness exceed the scribes and the Pharisees? Well, theirs was a righteousness of works and if you are trying to achieve a righteousness by works, there's no way you're going to exceed them. They've outworked you a long time ago. But God has established another basis for righteousness and that is the righteousness that God imparts or God accounts to a man by that man's faith in the finished work of God. By a man's faith in Jesus Christ, God accounts his faith for righteousness.

And Paul said, "I gladly threw over that righteousness that I once had which was of the law. Those things which were gained to me under the law I counted loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ for whom I suffered the loss of all things and do count them but refuse that I may know him and to be found in him; not having my own righteousness which is of the law but the righteousness which is through faith" ([Philippians 3:8-9](#)).

So this new relationship with God: righteous by the faith and by believing in Jesus Christ and God having imparted to me then that, or God accounting to me righteousness; thereby, my righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees because God has imparted to me the righteousness of Jesus Christ, exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees. And therein is my only hope of entering into the kingdom of heaven: my faith in God's finished work through Jesus Christ in achieving for me that righteous standing before God.

Now, we get into chapter six and here Jesus, first of all, enunciates a principle, and as is the method of great teachers, there is statement of the principle and then the illustration and amplification of that principle. The principle is this:

Take heed to yourself, be careful that you do not your righteous deeds ([Mat 6:1](#))

The alms being the righteous acts.

before men, to be seen of men([Mat 6:1](#)):

Now he's talking here about the motives for which you do things, for which you do your righteous things. Make sure that the motive by which you are prompted to do these things does not come from your desire to be recognized and noted by men. Take heed that you do not your righteous act to be seen of men.

The Bible tells us that we are all going to stand before the judgement seat of Christ and our works are going to be judged of what sort they are. Our works will be judged actually by the motives behind the work; what motivated me to do it. And if my motivations in doing my righteous deeds are wrong, than those deeds are worthless and they will be burned and consumed as wood, hay and stubble. For all

of our works will be tried by fire. Many of our works that we have done for the Lord will just be consumed. They'll go up in smoke. Now, those things which I've done out of a pure heart and pure motive before God, those that remain the testing of fire, I'll receive a reward for them. But all of our works are to be judged of what sort or what motivation is behind the works.

Now Paul the apostle speaks of that which motivated him, he said, "For the love of Christ constrains me" ([2 Corinthians 5:14](#)). And really love is the greatest motivator for Christian service and the only valid motivator for Christian service.

I can be doing a lot of wonderful things but if I don't do it in love, they become worthless. You see, I can even sell everything that I have, distribute all of the profit to the poor, but I can do it in such a way that I call the newspaper and say, "Hey send a reporter out here. I got my house for sale and I'm going to give everything to the poor". And then once I sold my house, I put up a big sign, you know, "Chuck's relief program", and I invite all the poor in and all the photographers and everything else and I start giving out, you know, all of my goods and I feed the poor and I stand there smiling for the photographers. Channel seven and channel five come out you know, and they take their pictures and I get my face in. This is wonderful. Look what this man has done. Oh how glorious, he sold everything and gave to the poor. But you see my motive was to get my smiling face before the public and have everybody say, "Oh, isn't that marvelous". That's my reward, everybody is saying "Oh isn't that marvelous" and I better listen carefully and tune in on that "Oh isn't that grand?" because that's all the reward I'm gonna get.

And when I come up before God and stand before God and give him that Pepsident smile, you know, that I gave to the TV cameras, you know. Pin it on me Lord, I'm ready now to receive. And he looks at the account and he says, "Well, I don't see anything here, Chuck". I say, "Wait a minute Lord. What do you mean you don't see anything? Didn't you watch channel seven? Didn't you hear those people raving about how marvelous I was?" "Oh yes I remember. That was your reward".

And that's basically what Jesus is saying here. Now be careful what your motive is. Don't do things in such a way as to draw attention to yourself. That is, to draw the praise of people and the applause of the crowd. For if that is what's behind it and you're doing it in such a way as to attract attention to your good works, then the attention that you've attracted is all the reward you're gonna get. So take heed that you don't do your righteous act to be seen of men, before men to be seen of them.

Now, there is a balance here because earlier Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world" ([Mat 5:14](#)) and you can't hide a light. Therefore what you do is going to be seen; it's going to be noticed. You can't hide the light. You're the light of the world, but "let your light so shine before men that when they see your good works they glorify your Father which is in heaven" ([Mat 5:16](#)). Now that's not always easy to do, but we are to seek to do those good works in such a way that when people see what we

are doing, they won't be glorifying us but they'll be glorifying God. And that has to be of course, the motive behind it all to bring glory to God because I love God. I want to serve God. I'm doing it for him, that is the motive that God will honor. But if my motive is to receive glory and praise and credit for man, then the glory, praise and credit that I receive is my reward.

Now, there are those who say that we should not be interested in rewards, that we should be good just for goodness sake and that's, well that's again a very magnanimous thing to say. And people usually say that in order that they might appear to be very magnanimous, and thus they have their reward when they have said it, because people say, "Oh, isn't that marvelous? What pure heart he has. Oh, what a pure motive" you know. "He doesn't want any reward, he just wants to be good because he's good. Oh that's sweet" you know. That's sickly and it's unscriptural.

Jesus speaks many times here about rewards and how that we should be concerned for rewards, those rewards that come from our heavenly Father. So there is a place of reward in the Christian experience. Now, salvation is not a reward. Salvation is a gift of God through his grace towards us in Christ Jesus. And salvation is something that God gives to me through my faith in Jesus Christ, and it's nothing to do with my works or my effort or anything else. It only has to do with my simply believing on Jesus Christ and God gives to me that glorious gift of eternal life. God doesn't reward me with eternal life; that is a gift of God. I don't earn eternal life, I can't work for eternal life; it's a gift of God and not of works lest any man should boast.

But, as a child of God, there are responsibilities that God places upon me. There are opportunities that God gives me of serving him. And I will stand before God and I will be rewarded according to my faithfulness in the fulfilling of those obligations and responsibilities that God has placed before me while I am here. And so it is proper for me to desire that reward from God and to seek after that reward from God.

Now, Jesus said if you do your righteousness before men to be seen of men, basically you have your reward in the fact that men see what you're doing and acknowledge it and they praise you for it. And then Jesus gives three illustrations to this basic principle as he deals with the three basic righteous things that men do. And that is the giving of their alms, their prayer and the mortifying of their flesh. And there is a right way and there is a wrong way to do each of these things. There's a right way to give to God; there's a wrong way to give to God. You give the wrong way and you've received your reward. You give the right way and God will reward you. And so it all depends on where and from what source you want your rewards. You want your reward from God or you want your reward from man?

Now there are a lot of people who are satisfied and desire the reward of man. In a few days, the fourth of July, we're going to see tremendous pyrotechnic displays and these skyrockets are, they're

getting more exotic every year. And as you watch these bursts of colors in the air, you hear the boom and you see all of these colors bursting out and these little things squirreling away and everybody says, "Oh". You're sitting there in the Anaheim stadium, perhaps, and this thing goes off and everybody "Ah" you know. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful. Big flash, big burst, everybody's awing over it, but oh, it burns out so rapidly. You know it's just for a moment, boom; it's gone.

So the glory of the world, it's like a skyrocket. You know, you come on the world scene and we've watched it, you've lived long enough to see those who came on the world scene and everybody say "Ah, oh" and a big flash, but oh what a quick burnout. Now they're gone. They're being replaced by the new flashing stars. And the glory of the world is so shallow; it passes so rapidly.

But you know, up there in the sky, there are trillion displays of fire and glory. Those stars, oh, I tell ya; if you could just look at them closely enough you'd see fantastic, spectacular displays of glory and beauty and they just keep going on and on and on. And long after the skyrockets have expended their glory and fallen in ashes to the ground, the stars are still there.

Daniel said, "And they who are wise will lead many to righteousness and they shall shine as the stars forever and ever" ([Daniel 12:3](#)). And, it all depends on which sky you want to shine. You can do your works before man in such a way that everybody says, "Ah, oh" you know, big flash, everybody's all excited and, and everybody's going around saying "Oh, did you know what he did? Oh, isn't that wonderful? Oh, he's so glorious" you know. You're soon ashes, everybody's forgotten and they're looking for the next flash. Or you can do it in such a way that forever in God's kingdom shining in that glory of his splendor and his beauty.

So, when you give, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have the glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward ([Mat 6:2](#)).

Now, I don't know if Jesus is exaggerating here or not. I have never really heard of anybody hiring a band to go before them when they are carrying their gift to church, you know, ready to drop your money in the offering and have the guy stand up and give a trumpet fanfare, you know, and so you come forward and place your gift in.

However, however, I have seen services where the evangelist will say; "Now God has revealed to me ye, that there are fifteen people here tonight that are going to give a thousand dollars to my ministry. Bless God. Hallelujah. I want you fifteen that God is speaking to your heart now to give that thousand dollars. I want you to stand to your feet" you know. And they harangue and they harass and they go until, "Praise God, look there's a brother over there. Oh, praise God brother, hallelujah". And the guy's standing there holding up his check, you know, and the evangelist runs back and gets it because I'll personally receive, you know. I'll personally take it out of your hand, you know. Greedy soul.

Now, as far as God is concerned, you will receive no reward from God for that thousand-dollar offering that you just gave. You already have your reward because, in a sense, you've sounded a trumpet. You've made a big public display out of your giving and everybody knows how generous you were. You stood to your feet; you received the applause of the people. Just drink it in because that's all the reward you're gonna get. Now to me, it is indeed sad and tragic that there are many people who actually encourage people to give with that kind of motivation because even in their receiving the peoples funds, using that as the motivator behind it, they have robbed those people from the reward that God would give them for the gifts that they have made. And I hold the evangelists responsible. They should know better. Sheep are often dumb and they don't know any better, but those people who are receiving money that way should know better and they are responsible. The Lord said you shouldn't be giving with a fanfare in a way to be seen of men. Not to make a parade, not to make a big to do over what you have given to God.

But when you give your alms, really, just don't even let your right hand know what your left hand is doing ([Mat 6:3](#)):

Just give. Don't make a big deal over it

That your alms may be in secret: and your Father which sees in secret shall reward thee openly ([Mat 6:4](#)).

So in our giving is to be simple, with simplicity. Our giving to God, Paul tells us in the Corinthian epistle, is never to be out of constraint or pressure. We should never feel pressured to give to God. God doesn't want people to give to him motivated by pressure. Oh here's the finance committee coming to the door and they're going to get our annual pledge. Oh no. What are we gonna just say this time, you know. And of course I'm under the pressure.

Here are these important people; there's the banker there and there's the attorney and here's my doctor, you know and they're sitting there and I'm on the hot seat because I've gotta make my pledge to the church for the year. And these guys are all gonna know what I'm gonna pledge. And I don't want to look like a skinny skinflint. And so, what am I gonna do, you know. So I feel the pressure and I say, "Well, this year I think we're gonna try and give a thousand dollars to the church". And I here my banker sort of ahem, hum, hmm, a thousand dollars. Well, you know we're really wanting to add a few programs to the church this year so we really need -- well, maybe I can give twelve hundred, you know.

So then comes the first month and I owe a hundred bucks and oh no, I can't afford this hundred dollars. Oh, but I got to do it. I promised I'd do it, you know. And every month I find myself gritting and struggling over trying to make my pledge, and I'm griping about it and I'm upset about it. Hey, God doesn't appreciate anything given to him that you gripe about. You'd be much better off not to give

than to give and gripe. Let them think that you're tight, let them think that you're not benevolent, let them think what they want, but don't give to God out of pressure.

Paul said, "Therefore, as everyone is purposed in his own heart so let him set it aside and let him give hilariously because God loves a hilarious giver" ([2 Corinthians 9:7](#)). Whatever you can give to God hilariously, give. What you can't give to God hilariously, keep. God doesn't want it and God doesn't need it. And thus, the giving to God should always be a personal matter between the Lord and our family and it is something that we do because we love the Lord and we're motivated by our love for him, but we're not looking for credit from man or not looking to receive from man great accolades because of our generosity and giving to God.

Now, the question of the tithe envelopes then. This is a necessity that is laid upon us by the U.S. Government The Internal Revenue Services, just one of the other evils that come from the IRS. A, I don't believe that we should pay more taxes than what are due. I think we should pay what are due but I don't think we should pay anymore than our due. And thus, for the purposes of the IRS we make out checks or we fill out an envelope that we might keep a record in case the IRS questions concerning your giving. But those files are strictly confidential. They are something that is between you and the Lord. And those are things that we only send you, your receipt at the end of the year and it is something that only you and the Lord know. I don't even know. I don't bother to go through those files. I'm not concerned. It's something between you and God and it's a personal thing. And we want to keep the giving just as personal as possible.

And so your giving, let it be with simplicity, let it be out of a cheerful heart and let it be motivated by your love for the Lord and not your desire to be seen by men.

Then when you pray ([Mat 6:5](#)),

There's a wrong and a right way to pray.

Now don't be as the hypocrites: for they love to pray standing in the synagogue and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of man. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward ([Mat 6:5](#)).

Now prayer was a very important thing in the life of the Jew. Twice a day he had to say the Shema, which comprised of three sections of the Old Testament scriptures beginning with Deuteronomy six there, "The Lord our God is one Lord and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy might, with all thy strength". And he had to say that, the first thing in the morning and he had to say it the last thing at night. He was to say it before nine o'clock in the morning and he was to say it before nine o'clock in the evening but twice a day he would say the Shema.

Then there was the second form of prayers, the Shiminoph. The Shiminoph was actually eighteen separate prayers, later on they added the nineteenth but they kept the word shiminoph, eighteen. And there were eighteen prayers that they would memorize as a child and they had to say three times a day; nine o'clock in the morning, twelve at noon and three o'clock in the afternoon.

Now because they had to say these same prayers every day, morning, afternoon and evening, it became a custom, as anything that you know we do by custom. It became something that, to many of them, was totally meaningless. I mean, it's a duty. I've gotta do it so you race through these eighteen prayers saying them just as rapidly as you can. You know, it's a duty. I gotta perform, you know, it's nine o'clock and okay, here we go, you know, and you race through the eighteen prayers. And then it's twelve o'clock; time to do it again and you race through the same eighteen prayers.

Now, with that as a background, you see, there were those who would time themselves so that when nine o'clock in the morning came they would be in a very conspicuous place on the street corner. Nine o'clock, oops, you know, and prayer shawl comes on, swoop, swoop, wrap themselves up and, and so they go through the eighteen prayers. And everybody says, oh ain't that wonderful? He stops right in the middle of his busy day right there in the street corner going through his eighteen prayers. Oh, he must be spiritual.

And it is possible that as you're going through your eighteen prayers you're thinking, oh, I know they're all watching me and they know how spiritual I am. They know that I'm a holy man. Isn't this glorious, you know, that everybody knows how righteous I am. Hmm, Lord I thank you, you know.

Now anything that we do repeat over and over again, the same words can easily become meaningless. You know, we set the little group patterns in our brain and all we have to do is tune in to that particular channel and set the, push the button and you can just say it without even thinking.

"Now I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take" you know. I mean it; you push the button and it goes. It's like pulling the string on little dollies. I mean it's just something that's programmed in, you know. "God is great, God is good, we thank you Father for our food" you know. And you can mouth these words without even-- you can be thinking about something else entirely as you're saying these words. I don't have to be thinking about what I say because I can just say these words by rote. And thus they become empty repetition of words. So first of all when I pray, I'm not to seek to get in some conspicuous place so everybody will see that I am a man of prayer.

I heard the reputation of a minister. Everybody said oh, he's such a man of prayer. And I was anxious to meet this fellow because I'd heard his reputation of being a man of prayer. And so it happened that I was at a summer camp speaking and he was also at that same summer camp. And I found out how he got his reputation as a man of prayer. Every morning at six o'clock down in the chapel, you could

hear this fellow praying; all over camp you can hear him praying. And from six to seven you could hear him praying down there in the chapel, crying out to the Lord.

And I often wondered does God want us to have a reputation of a man of prayer? Is it not better to go into the closet, and shut the door, and pray to the Father who sees in secret; and the Father who sees in secret then will be the one who rewards us ([Mat 6:6](#)).

I would not be surprised, but what the reward that that man gets from his prayer life is not the fact that he has a tremendous reputation of being a man of prayer. And he loves that reputation and he's doing everything to keep that reputation alive by praying in such a way that everybody is noticing the fact that he is praying.

Now we've got to be careful about motivation. Even in prayer, what I pray for is tested by motivation. James said, "You have not because you ask not" and then he added, "And you ask and receive not because you ask amiss that you might consume it on your own lusts" ([James 4:3](#)). In other words, it's possible for me to even have the wrong motivation for praying what I'm praying for. Motivation is such an important thing. That's why the Bible said, "Let every man examine himself, for if we will judge ourselves we will not be judged of God" ([1 Corinthians 11:28](#), [31](#)). And it's good to examine, "Why did I do that?"

Now I do not always know. It's possible for me to deceive myself. And David, realizing the possibility of deceiving himself concerning his own personal motivations said Lord, "You have searched me. You know me. You know my down sittings, my uprisings. You understand my thoughts in their origins" he said, "such knowledge is too great for me. I cannot attain it. I really don't know myself Lord". And so he concludes that Psalm by saying, "Search me O God and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be some wicked way in me" ([Psalm 139:23](#)).

O God you search me, God you show me, God you reveal what is in my heart because I can be deceiving myself. But I'm not deceiving God, for he searches the hearts, the reins. He knows what are the motives behind everything I do. And God knows I don't want to waste my time. If I'm gonna do it, I want to be doing it out of the right motivation and I want to receive the rewards from the Lord for doing it.

And so in our prayers, be careful that we do not seek to pray drawing attention to ourselves or praying to impress people that they might be seen of men. The idea behind it is they're trying to impress people. Be careful that you don't pray to impress people. Prayer is not intended to impress people; it's intended to impress God. "Go into your closet, shut the door. Your Father which sees in secret will reward you openly".

The second negative is

Don't use the vain repetitions ([Mat 6:7](#)),

As they were doing in those days

thinking that you'll be heard for your much speaking ([Mat 6:7](#)).

It isn't the length of prayer nor is it the time or the amount of time spent in prayer that makes prayer valid. Those prayers that are recorded in the Bible are all, have been very short. So many times we think that prayer doesn't really become effective until we've been on our knees for an hour; not so. There's no sense in just filling up the time with meaningless little stereotype phrases when I'm talking to God. When you come in to God sit down, declare your business to God, declare your heart; open it to him, lay it out before him and be brief, be concise.

Because the Lord knows what you have need of, before you ever ask him ([Mat 6:8](#)).

Prayer's not information time where I'm now gonna inform you God of everything that's gone wrong in my life today. God knows everything that's gone wrong. I don't have to rehearse it for him nor do I have to go over a long list of my needs. God knows what I have need of before I ever ask him. And so don't use vain repetitions just to fill up time. The heathen think that they're gonna be heard for their much speaking, but it isn't the much speaking.

Now Jesus then gave to us a model prayer. It is tragic that many people have taken this model prayer and use it in vain repetition. And so they say this model prayer over and over again and they are encouraged many times to do so, as far as their penance is concerned, you know, so many hail Mary's and so many Our Father's, which are nothing but vain repetition. The very thing that Jesus spoke against: thinking that you'll be heard for your much speaking. No, you won't.

And just to repeat the Lord's prayer out of memory really has no value. There's tremendous value if you'll take it very slowly, phrase by phrase and really think upon it and meditate upon it. But basically, he's giving to us a model prayer. And as he gives to us the model prayer - first of all, prayer always is dependent upon relationship, and thus it is significant that the prayer opens expressing relationship,

Our Father ([Mat 6:9](#))

And if he is not your Father then you have no right to call on Him.

The blind man said to the Pharisees when they were challenging him on how he was healed. He said "Well this man came and he laid his hands on me and I can see". Well what did he do? "Well, I told ya." And they said, "Well, as far as the man... " they said, "Give this glory to God. As far as this man we don't know anything about him" ([John 9:15](#), [24](#)). I said ain't that a marvelous thing? Here's someone you don't know anything about and he's opening the eyes of the blind. He's doing the work of the Messiah. And they got angry at the man. The man says, hey, we know that God doesn't hear, you know, the prayers of sinners. He must be doing something right if God's answering his prayers.

Now, notice that that isn't necessarily Biblical truth. This is the statement of a blind man to the Pharisees because in reality God does hear the prayer of sinners. One prayer at least, "God be merciful to me a sinner". Thank God he hears that prayer. And yet, David said "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord does not hear me when I pray". That's divine truth. "God's hand is not short that he cannot save, neither is his ear heavy that he cannot hear but your sin has separated between you and your God" that's divine truth. Sin separates a man from God. However, there is relationship involved in prayer. And that relationship is a child coming to the Father. And I'm a child of God through my faith in Jesus Christ. And so I can say, "Father".

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name ([Mat 6:9](#)).

The word "hallowed" could also be translated reverend. You know the Jews had a very high respect for the name of God. In fact, they had such a high respect for the name of God that they came to the place where they felt that their lips were unworthy to utter the name of God. Ultimately they came to the place where they thought that their minds were unworthy to even think of the name of God, to think it in their minds. So as the scribes, in copying the scriptures, would come to the name of God instead of writing the vowels they only wrote the consonance: YHVH. Try and pronounce that. Without the vowels you don't know how it is pronounced. And so to the present date we do not know how to pronounce the name of God.

But before the scribes would even write the YHVH in their manuscript, they would go in, take a bath, put on fresh clothes, take a new pen, dip it in fresh ink and then write those consonants YHVH. And imagine in a passage where you have the name of the Lord listed five or six times. Yet it became a little tradition among them that when they were copying they would always go and take this ritual bath and put on fresh clothes and then write those consonance YHVH. Now, whether or not the name was pronounced Jehovah or Yahweh, we're really not sure. Most scholars think that it was Yahweh. But the pronunciation of God's name has been lost as the result of this tradition among the Jews. But, oh, how highly did they esteem his name.

In the psalms it's the psalmist declared, "Holy and reverend is thy name" ([Psalms 111:9](#)). Here, basically, the same thing is being said in the Lord's prayer. Hallowed or reverend it be thy name. Now, where in the world men ever got the tradition of tacking reverend on the name of a man, I do not know. But I really do not consider myself as reverend Chuck Smith. I don't think there's anything reverend about the name Chuck. But it's unfortunate, you know, they start out and they say reverend Chuck Smith, and then you know they're trying to puff you up a little more and they say, "The reverend Chuck Smith". And then they try to puff you up a little more and they say, "The most reverend Chuck Smith" you know and "the most right reverend Chuck Smith". And you know they start adding all these titles to man. Oh how tragic, how sad. I really don't care for a title.

The name of the Lord is reverend; it's hallowed, but surely not the name of any man. Now a lot of people take the title in ignorance and I don't accept that. A lot of people in writing to me write "Dear reverend Smith" or "reverend Smith" or whatever and I just laugh and I know that they don't know me because I don't consider myself reverend at all. I do reverence God and I reverence his name but there's nothing reverend about my name. And so I don't make a big deal over it but I mean it's just something that you know, it's one of those things that people started and they carry on. It's the exalting of man and I don't believe in the exalting of man. I believe, you know, that no flesh should glory in his sight. Let's exalt the Lord. Hold his name reverend and hallowed but let's not be exalting man. For he that exalts himself, the Lord will abase.

So, recognition is next. First of all, relationship; "Our Father". Recognition. "Which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name". Holy and reverend is thy name. I'm talking now to God who has created the universe. He said to Jeremiah, "Behold I am the Lord. Is there anything too hard for me?" ([Jeremiah 32:27](#)) I need to remember that when I pray because so often when I pray, I carry my own limitations in. This thing is too tough for me, it's too much for me; I can't handle it. And I'm prone many times to carry that sense of defeat or overwhelmed by the problem into my prayer life with God as though it's overwhelmed me. Surely it's gonna overwhelm God.

And so recognition of the one that I'm talking to is so important in prayer. We are told in Hebrews, "For he that cometh unto God must believe that he is" ([Hebrews 11:6](#)). That he is what? That he is the eternal God who sees as Jesus said, who knows as Jesus said, who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all I ask of God.

Now, "Hallowed it be thy name" is actually a petition. It's praying that God's name be revered and held in high esteem or hallowed by men.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven ([Mat 6:10](#)).

Two more petitions, but the first three petitions all relate to God. They do not relate to me. In prayer, my primary thrust in prayer should be that desire to get God's will accomplished. It is wrong to think of prayer as an agency by which I can get my wishes fulfilled. God never intended prayer to be a means by which my wishes can be granted. God intended prayer as a means whereby I might work in cooperation with him in getting his will done on this rebellious planet earth. And true prayer begins with God. The purpose and the plan of God and prayer is never intended as changing the purposes of God.

I believe that every right thing that I have ever prayed for and received, God had already purposed and planned to give it to me before I ever prayed. You say then why pray? Because God has made me a free moral agent. God has given me the capacity of choice and God honors my choice and will not violate my free will. God will only do for me what I am willing for Him to do for me and what I allow

Him to do for me. Therefore, prayer is opening the door to God to do the things for me that he was planning and wanting to do all the while but would not do against my will.

Jesus said to his disciples in John the fifteenth chapter "Now you have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should be my disciples and that you should bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, he may [not shall] he may give it to you." ([John 15:16](#)) God wants to give it to you, God wants to do for you but He will not cross or violate your free will which he gave to you. But prayer opens the door then for God to do for you what he's been wanting to do the whole time but will not violate or cross your will to do it. So prayer begins with God, the purposes of God. And the real thrust of prayer is not my will be done - and this is the fallacy of these teachers today who have become so popular on television and in the full gospel circle. And that's the tragedy of the full gospel circles is the lack of theological depth. The people are so shallow they are chasing after every new wind of doctrine. It's like cunning of men who are going around with some new concept and everybody begins to traipse after them. And now it's the old, you know, thing that prayer is you know, your grabbing the scepter and ruling the world. You demand that God do it, you know, and you insist and you press and you pray and you believe and God's gotta do whatever you ask him to do. Not so.

God is no little genie that has to fulfill your wishes. He is the sovereign Lord of the universe and in control of the universe. And let me say that I thank God for all of my unanswered prayers. I would've had this world in a big mess had God answered all my prayers because I was praying about things about which I really did not fully understand because I could only see partially. And I was sure that I had full knowledge but only had partial knowledge. And I was praying according to my partial knowledge and when I got full knowledge I said, "Whoa, thank God he didn't answer that one. Boy what a mess I'd have been in" you know. Let God be sovereign, let God be God. Honor him as God and realize that the real thrust of prayer is not to fulfill my wishes but is to get his will done; "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven."

Yes I do have needs and yes it is proper and right that I petition God for my own needs. And so, we have these petitions that deal with our own needs.

Give us this day our daily bread ([Mat 6:11](#)).

Those provisions that are so essential for life and the maintenance of life.

Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors ([Mat 6:12](#)).

And forgiveness is such an important thing. Notice, the first one deals with the present. It's my present needs, give us this day. The second one deals with the past, the forgiveness. That's one of

the things that I've done wrong up to this moment. Forgive us our debts, that deals with past; and then

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one ([Mat 6:13](#)):

That's in the future. God, take over the reigns and guide my life through the future. So in these petitions they deal with the past, the present the future. They deal with my provisions, with my forgiveness, with my guidance and with my deliverance, these personal petitions. And those are the basic issues that I need to come to God for concerning my own personal life; the provisions, the forgiveness and the guidance and deliverance.

But then prayer goes back to God.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen ([Mat 6:13](#)).

Now, prayer actually takes three forms. Prayer is worship. Prayer is just that awareness and awe of the greatness and the glory of God. And this is an important part of prayer, just that worshipping the Lord for what he is. Not asking him for anything but just that worshipping God as I am aware and conscience of his greatness and of his glory and his power. It's that sense that you feel when you look up into a desert sky. Oh God is so great. Oh he's so vast. And just that awareness and consciousness and awe of that greatness of God. It's that sense that you get when you look at a beautiful flower and oh, He's so beautiful in his creative designs. It's that awe you get when you see a child born. Oh, he's so wise in his design of the life forms. Worship. But prayer is also a petition. In a narrow sense, the asking of God for my own needs. But in its third form, prayer is intercession. Where I am seeking then and petitioning God for the needs of the lost world around me.

And all three of these are brought forth in this model prayer for Jesus, "My kingdom come, My will be done on earth as it is in heaven" intercession for the kingdom. "Give us this day our daily bread" a petition for my own need. "Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever" that awe, the wonder and the glory and the greatness of God; the worship. Notice prayer begins with worship, ends with worship. Now we usually give petition first and then we move into intercession, but in the model prayer we have intercession first and then it moves into petition. I don't think the order is important but I think that all three forms should be followed when we pray. I think that we should spend time worshipping God. I think that we should spend time in intercessory prayer, and I think that we should spend time in the petitioning of God for our own individual needs.

Now it is interesting that in these various petitions that we make, that the petitions for forgiveness is predicated upon our forgiveness. "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors" ([Mat 6:12](#)). And immediately there comes the question, is this then works? And does my forgiving another depend

upon or does God forgiving me depend upon my forgiving another? And if so, then is forgiveness dependent upon works? And so you have a knotty theological problem. What does Jesus say?

Chuck Smith

Sermon Notes for Matthew 6:9

### "[MATTHEW 6:9](#)"

#### I. AFTER THIS MANNER PRAY.

A. He is clearly giving to the disciples a model or form for prayer.

1. It is not something to be repeated by rote in vain repetition, for He has just warned against vain repetitions in prayer.
2. He has given to them a model.

B. In Luke's gospel, Luke tells us that on another occasion the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Lord teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples to pray." And Jesus repeated for them this basic form for prayer.

1. It should be noted that they did not ask Jesus to teach them how to pray, but to teach them to pray.
2. He surely modeled for them the importance of prayer.

#### II. "OUR FATHER WHICH ART IN HEAVEN."

A. The first and most important thing for prayer is relationship.

1. "Our Father."
2. Prayer is a privilege for the children.
3. If you are not a child of God, you have no access to God.
4. I can come to God with my petition because I have a relationship. This relationship has come through His Son Jesus Christ.

a. John tells us that as many as received Him, to them gave He the power to become the sons of God, even to those who believed on His name.

B. The next in importance is the address.

1. Who are you addressing your prayer to?
2. Some people address their prayers to the great and almighty creative force of the universe.
3. Many address their prayers to Allah.
4. Jesus said that our prayers should be addressed to the Father in care of Jesus. "And whatsoever things you ask the Father in My name, that will I do that the Father might be glorified in the Son."
5. It is interesting to study the prayers in the Bible to note the addresses that were put on the prayers.
  - a. Eleazer the servant of Abraham,

[GEN 24:42](#) And I came this day unto the well, and said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go:

b. King Asa

[2CH 14:11](#) And Asa cried unto the LORD his God, and said, LORD, [it is] nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O LORD our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O LORD, thou [art] our God; let not man prevail against thee.

c. King Hezekiah

[2KI 19:15](#) And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD, and said, O LORD God of Israel, who dwells between the cherubims, You are the God, [even] You alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; You have made heaven and earth.

d. The priests in Nehemiah's day cried to the LORD God,

[NEH 9:6](#) You, [even] You, [are] LORD alone; You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all [things] that [are] therein, the seas, and all that [is] therein, and You preserve them all; and the host of heaven worships Thee.

e. Daniel

[Dan 9:4](#) And I prayed unto the LORD my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments;

f. Jesus

[LUK 10:21](#) In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

[JOH 11:41](#) Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up [his] eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

g. The disciples in Acts

[Act 4:24](#) And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, You are the God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that is in them.

h. Paul wrote to the Ephesians:

[EPH 3:14](#) For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

B. When you bring your needs to the Father, you need to meditate for just a moment on the greatness of His person and power.

1. This helps to put our request in perspective.

a. "Oh Lord, You are God, You made the heavens and the earth."

b. Too often we are so overwhelmed by the greatness of our difficulty, we fail to see the greatness of God.

2. In [Genesis 18](#) when the angels promised to Abraham that Sarah was going to have a son, because she had already passed through the menopause, Sarah who was standing in the tent laughed. The angel said, why did Sarah laugh, is anything too hard for God.

3. God said to Jeremiah,

[JER 32:27](#) Behold, I [am] the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?

### III. "HALLOWED BE THY NAME."

A. After the address, prayer moves into worship.

1. Upon recognition of the fact that I am in the presence of the Creator of the universe, I worship Him.
2. I think of how awesome He is.
3. I think of the wonder of His love for me, that he would even allow me in His presence.

B. His name is Yahweh or Yahovah, we are not certain of the correct pronunciation.

1. The Jews felt that the name was too holy to cross the lips of man, thus in the Hebrew text you only find the consonants YHVH.

2. It is a Hebrew verb that means the becoming one.

a. God will become to you whatever you need.

b. To Abraham He became Yahovah the provider. Yahovah yiera.

c. To Moses he became Yahovah Nissi our banner.

d. Jeremiah speaks of a day in the future when his name shall be Yehovah tsidkenu, The Lord our righteousness.

e. In Proverbs we are told that the name of Yehovah is a strong tower, the righteous run into it and are safe.

3. It is interesting that Paul tells us in Philippians that God has given to Jesus a name that is above all names that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

a. The name Jesus is another contraction of the name Yahovah. In the Hebrew it is Yah shua. The meaning is The Lord has become our salvation.

b. The angel told Joseph to call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins.

## David Guzik Study Guide for Matthew 6

### THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT (CONTINUED)

#### A. Doing good to please God.

1. ([Matthew 6:1](#)) Jesus' warning against doing good to be seen by others.

**"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven."**

a. **Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men:** **Charitable deeds** is actually the word *righteousness*. Jesus tells us to not do righteous things for the sake of display or image (**to be seen by them**).

i. Jesus has just clearly shown God's righteous standard; perhaps He anticipated the thought "Wouldn't everybody be impressed if I was like that?" So here Jesus addressed the danger of cultivating an *image* of righteousness. It is almost impossible to do spiritual things in front of others without thinking what their opinion is of us as we do those things, and how they are thinking better or worse of us as we do what we do.

ii. This does not contradict His previous command to *let your light so shine before men* ([Matthew 5:16](#)). Although Christians are to be seen doing good works, they must not do good works *simply* to be seen.

b. **Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven:** The idea is when we do righteous deeds for the attention and applause of men, their attention and applause is our reward. It is much better to receive a **reward from your Father in heaven**.

i. There are some who say, "All that is important is the *doing* of the deed. *How* I do it is much less important than the doing of it." It is true that in some cases it would be better to do the right thing in the wrong way or out of the wrong motive than to do the wrong thing, but Jesus' point is clear: *God cares about how we do our good works, and with what motive we do them*.

ii. Jesus thus begins to deal with three spiritual disciplines: giving, prayer, and fasting. "These three were (and are) the most prominent practical requirements for personal piety in mainstream Judaism... These same three activities, together with the specifically Islamic requirements of the Hajj and recitation of the creed, constitute also the Five Pillars of Islam." (France)

## 2. ([Matthew 6:2-4](#)) Examples of the wrong kind of giving and the right kind of giving.

**"Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly."**

a. **When you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet:** It was a custom for some in Jesus' day to draw attention to their giving so they would be known as generous. Today, people do not **sound a trumpet** to project the image of generosity, but they still know how to call attention to their giving.

i. There aren't good examples in ancient literature of people actually announcing their giving with the sound of a trumpet. It may be what Jesus had in mind was the gifts given during feast times, which were signaled by the blast of a trumpet. "These occasions afforded golden opportunities for ostentation." (Carson)

ii. Yet the idea of doing a **charitable deed** — giving alms and charity — was deeply established in the Jewish mind. "To give alms and to be righteous were one and the same thing. To give alms was to gain merit in the sight of God, and was even to win atonement and forgiveness for past sins." (Barclay)

b. **As the hypocrites do**: Such performers are rightly called **hypocrites**, because they are actors, acting the part of pious, holy people when they are not. It is not having a standard that makes someone a hypocrite; it is falsely claiming to live by that standard when you in fact do not, or when you have a double standard that makes one a hypocrite.

i. "In older Greek a **hypocrites** ('hypocrite') was an actor, but by the first century the term came to be used for those who play roles and see the world as their stage." (Carson)

ii. "There are religious actors still, and they draw good houses." (Bruce)

iii. "Oh, let us rather seek to be good than seem to be so." (Trapp)

c. **Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward**: Jesus tells the one who gives so he can hear the applause of others that he should enjoy the applause, because that will be all the reward that he will receive. There will be no reward in heaven for the one who did it for the motive of an earthly reward.

i. It is **all** they will receive. "It would be better to translate it: 'They have received payment in full.' The word that is used in the Greek is the verb **apechein**, which was the technical business and commercial word for receiving payment in full." (Barclay)

d. **Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing**: Instead, our giving is to be — if it were possible — even hidden from ourselves. Though we cannot really be ignorant about our own giving, we can deny ourselves any indulgent self-congratulation.

i. "Keep the thing so secret that even you yourself are hardly aware that you are doing anything at all praiseworthy. Let God be present, and you will have enough of an audience." (Spurgeon)

e. **That your charitable deed may be in secret**: If someone finds out that we have given something, do we automatically lose our reward? The issue is really a matter of **motive**. If we give for our own glory, it doesn't matter if no one finds out and we will still have no reward from God. But if we give for God's glory, it doesn't matter who finds out, because your reward will remain because you gave for the right motive.

f. **Our Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly**: Jesus pointed out the great value of doing good deeds for the glory of God. It is much better to receive our return from God, who rewards much more generously and much more **openly** than men do.

i. God does see in **secret**. “We should ever remember that the eye of the Lord is upon us, and that he sees not only the **act**, but also every motive that led to it.” (Clarke)

ii. We should not miss the strength of the promise — these things done the **right way** will **certainly** be rewarded. We can be sure of that, even when it doesn’t feel like it.

3. **(Matthew 6:5-6) Examples of the wrong kind of prayer and the right kind of prayer.**  
**“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who **is** in the secret **place**; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”**

a. **And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites**: Jesus assumed that His disciples would give, so He told them the right way to give (**Matthew 6:1-4**). He also assumed that His disciples would **pray**, and it was important that they not pray in the same manner as the **hypocrites**.

i. “There are no dumb children in God’s house; the least he hath can ask him blessing. All are not alike gifted, but every godly man prayeth unto thee, saith David, **Psalms 32:6**.” (Trapp)

b. **For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets**: There were two main places where a Jew in Jesus’ day might pray in a hypocritical manner. They might pray at the synagogue at the time of public prayer, or on the street at the appointed times of prayer (9 a.m., noon, and 3 p.m.).

i. “In synagogue worship someone from the congregation might be asked to pray publicly, standing in front of the ark.” (Carson)

ii. “Prayer was not normally practiced **at the street corners**, but...one who strictly observed the afternoon hour of prayer could deliberately time his movements to bring him to the most public place at the appropriate time.” (France)

c. **That they may be seen by men**: These hypocrites prayed not to be heard by God, but to **be seen by men**. This is a common fault in public prayer today, when people pray to impress or teach others instead of genuinely pouring out their hearts before God.

i. Such prayers are an insult to God. When we mouth words towards God while really trying to impress others, we then use God merely as a tool to impress others.

- d. **They have their reward**: Again, those praying to be seen of men **have their reward**, and they should enjoy it in full — because that is all they will receive. There is no reward in heaven for such prayers.
- e. **But you, when you pray, go into your room**: Rather, we should meet with God in our **room** (or “closet”). The idea is of a private place where we can impress no one except God.
- i. The specific ancient Greek word “**room**” was used for a storeroom where treasures were kept. This reminds us that there are treasures waiting for us in our prayer closet.
- ii. Jesus certainly did not prohibit public prayer, but our prayers should always be directed to God and not towards man.

#### 4. (**Matthew 6:7-8**) The right way to pray.

**“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen **do**. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”**

- a. **When you pray, do not use vain repetitions**: The right kind of prayer does not use **vain repetitions**, which is any and all prayer which is mostly words and no meaning; all lips and no mind or heart.
- i. “Rabbi Levi said, ‘Whoever is long in prayer is heard.’ Another saying has it: ‘Whenever the righteous make their prayer long, their prayer is heard.’” (Barclay) One famous Jewish prayer began like this: “Blessed, praised, and glorified, exalted, and honored, magnified and lauded be the name of the Holy One.”
- ii. One can pray long — but to the wrong god. In **1 Kings 18:26** the prophets of Baal cried out, “O Baal answer us” for half the day. In **Acts 19:34** a mob in Ephesus shouted, “Great is Artemis of the Ephesians” for two hours. The true God isn’t impressed by the **length** or **eloquence** of our prayers, but the heart. “Prayer requires more of the **heart** than of the **tongue**. The eloquence of prayer consists in the fervency of desire, and the simplicity of faith.” (Clarke)
- iii. When we try to impress God (or worse, other people) with our many words, we deny that God is a loving, yet holy Father. Instead, we should follow the counsel of **Ecclesiastes 5:2**: *God is in heaven, and you are on earth; therefore let your words be few.*
- iv. “Christians’ prayers are measured by weight, and not by length. Many of the most prevailing prayers have been as short as they were strong.” (Spurgeon)
- v. The NIV translates the phrase **vain repetitions** as “keep on babbling.” That may be an accurate sense of the ancient Greek word **battalogo**, which may be a word that sounds like “babbling” and has the sense of “blah-blah-blah.”

b. **Your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him**: We don't pray to tell God things that He didn't know before we told Him. We pray to commune with and appeal to a loving God who wants us to bring every need and worry before His throne.

- i. "Prayer is not designed to inform God, but to give man a sight of his misery; to humble his heart, to excite his desire, to inflame his faith, to animate his hope, to raise his soul from earth to heaven, and to put him in mind that THERE is his Father, his country, and inheritance." (Clarke)
- ii. In the following verses, Jesus will begin a memorable explanation of the right way to pray with the words, "In this manner, therefore pray." Jesus then gave His disciples a model for prayer, prayer marked by close relationship, reverence, submission, and trust and dependence. Since Luke 11:2-4 has much the same material, it is reasonable to believe that this was not the only time Jesus taught His disciples on this subject.
- iii. "In contrast with ostentatious prayer or thoughtless prayer, Jesus gives his disciples a model. But it is only a model: 'This is how [not what] you should pray.'" (Carson)
- iv. "We may use the Paternoster, but we are not bound to use it. It is not in turn to become a fetish. Reformers do not arise to break old fetters only in order to forge new ones." (Bruce)

#### 5. (Matthew 6:9-13) The model prayer.

**In this manner, therefore, pray:**

**Our Father in heaven,**

**Hallowed be Your name.**

**Your kingdom come.**

**Your will be done**

**On earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread.**

**And forgive us our debts,**

**As we forgive our debtors.**

**And do not lead us into temptation,**

**But deliver us from the evil one.**

**For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

- a. **Our Father in heaven**: The right kind of prayer comes to God as a **Father in heaven**. It rightly recognizes whom we pray to, coming with a privileged title that demonstrates a privileged relationship. It was very unusual for the Jews of that day to call God "**Father**" because it was considered too intimate.

- i. It is true that God is the mighty sovereign of the universe who created, governs, and will judge all things — but He is also to us a **Father**.
- ii. He is our **Father**, but He is our **Father in heaven**. When we say “**in heaven**,” we remember God’s holiness and glory. He is **our Father**, but our Father **in heaven**.
- iii. This is a prayer focused on **community**; Jesus said “**Our Father**” and not “My Father.” “The whole prayer is social. The singular pronoun is absent. Man enters the presence of the Father, and then prays as one of the great family.” (Morgan)
- iv. “There is no evidence of anyone before Jesus using this term to address God.” (Carson)

b. **Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven**: The right kind of prayer has a passion for God’s glory and agenda. His **name**, **kingdom** and **will** have the top priority.

- i. Everyone wants to guard their own name and reputation, but we must resist the tendency to protect and promote ourselves first and instead put God’s **name**, **kingdom** and **will** first.
- ii. Jesus wanted us to pray with the desire that the **will** of God would **be done on earth as it is in heaven**. In heaven there is no disobedience and no obstacles to God’s will; on earth there is disobedience and at least apparent obstacles to His will. The citizens of Jesus’ kingdom will want to see His will done as freely **on earth as it is in heaven**.
- iii. “He that taught us this prayer used it himself in the most unrestricted sense. When the bloody sweat stood on his face, and all the fear and trembling of a man in anguish were upon him, he did not dispute the decree of the Father, but bowed his head and cried. ‘Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.’” (Spurgeon)
- iv. A man can say, “**Your will be done**” in different ways and moods. He may say it with fatalism and resentment, “You will do your will, and there is nothing I can do about it anyway. Your will wins, but I don’t like it” or he may say it with a heart of perfect love and trust, “Do Your will, because I know it is the best. Change me where I don’t understand or accept Your will.”
- v. One might rightly wonder why God wants us to pray that **His** will would be done, as if He were not able to accomplish it Himself. God is more than able to do His will without our prayer or cooperation; yet He invites the participation of our prayers, our heart, and our actions in seeing His **will be done on earth as it is in heaven**.

c. **Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one**: The right kind of prayer will freely bring its own needs to God. This will include needs for daily provision, forgiveness, and strength in the face of temptation.

- i. When Jesus spoke of **bread**, He meant real bread, as in the sense of daily provisions. Early theologians allegorized this, because they couldn’t imagine Jesus speaking about an

everyday thing like bread in such a majestic prayer like this. So they thought bread referred to communion, the Lord's Supper. Some have thought it referred to Jesus Himself as the bread of life. Others have thought it speaks of the Word of God as our daily bread. Calvin rightly said of such interpretations which fail to see God's interest in everyday things, "This is exceedingly absurd." God does care about everyday things, and we should pray about them.

ii. "The prayer is for our needs, not our greeds. It is for one day at a time, reflecting the precarious lifestyle of many first-century workers who were paid one day at a time and for whom a few days' illness could spell tragedy." (Carson)

iii. "Sin is represented here under the notion of a debt, and as our sins are many, they are called here debts. God made man that he might live to his glory, and gave him a law to walk by; and if, when he does any thing that tends not to glorify God, he contracts a debt with Divine Justice." (Clarke)

iv. **Temptation** literally means a test, not always a solicitation to do evil. God has promised to keep us from any testing that is greater than what we can handle ([1 Corinthians 10:13](#)).

v. "God, while he does not 'tempt' men to do evil ([James 1:13](#)), does allow his children to pass through periods of testing. But disciples, aware of their weakness, should not desire such testing, and should pray to be spared exposure to such situations in which they are vulnerable." (France)

vi. "The man who prays 'Lead us not into temptation,' and then goes into it is a liar before God... 'Lead us not into temptation,' is shameful profanity when it comes from the lips of men who resort to places of amusement whose moral tone is bad." (Spurgeon)

vii. If we truly pray, **lead us not into temptation**, it will be lived out in several ways. It will mean:

- Never boast in your own strength.
- Never desire trials.
- Never go into temptation.
- Never lead others into temptation.

d. **For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever**: The right kind of prayer praises God and credits to Him **the kingdom and the power and the glory**.

i. There is some dispute as to whether this doxology is in the original manuscript Matthew wrote or was added in later by a scribe. Most modern Biblical scholars believe this line was a later addition.

ii. "It is variously written in several MSS., and omitted by most of the fathers, both Greek and Latin. As the doxology is at least very ancient, and was in use among the Jews, as well as all the other petitions of this excellent prayer, it should not, in my opinion, be left out of the text, merely because some MSS. have omitted it, and it has been variously written in others."  
(Clarke)

# Understanding and saving Gen Z to save America

Those born between 1997 and 2012 stand as a profoundly damaged cohort, scarred by ideological indoctrination and a narcissistic culture that breeds entitlement

RealClear

By Scott W. Atlas, Real Clear Wire  
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Generation Z, those born between 1997 and 2012, stands as a profoundly damaged cohort, scarred by ideological indoctrination, social media's corrosive grip, marginalization of morality anchors like religion and families, and a narcissistic culture that breeds entitlement. Gen Z's alarming psychological fragility – hypersensitivity to "microaggressions," equating words with violence, and an obsession with censoring "misinformation" – amplifies their vulnerability to a perverse rationale for violence. This was starkly illustrated by the assassination of Charlie Kirk on Sept. 10, 2025, at Utah Valley University, while he engaged in civil debate, essential to a free, peaceful society.

Gen Z's fragility is shocking to those of us who grew up with brave parents who fought in world wars and who immigrated with nothing but a strong will to live free. Gen Z focuses on perceived harms from words, demanding censorship for protection, with 72% endorsing shouting down speakers and 34% justifying violence to suppress speech. Their cancel culture thrives, with 97% engaging in unfollowing or blocking, the online version of intolerant mob behavior. This betrays a

psychological frailty that undermines resilience and prevents discourse necessary for peaceful coexistence.

Gen Z's dysfunction is undeniable. They average nine hours daily on screens, over three hours on social media, eroding real-world connections. This fuels asocial behavior, surging loneliness, and poor mental health; only half favor personal over virtual interactions. Financially, they falter: 55% find homeownership harder, 44% struggle to secure jobs, and 55% see promotions as elusive, fostering underachievement. Employers note that 65% of recent college graduates feel entitled, 63% are easily offended, and 55% lack professionalism and work ethic. Mental health crises are rampant, with depression, anxiety, and hopelessness spiking, especially among liberal-leaning youth, driven by a victimhood culture amplified by social media.

Gen Z's psychological frailty sets the stage for unique vulnerability to social contagion, suggested by the explosion of gender confusion. Transgender identification among young adults surged from 0.59% in 2014 to 3.08% in 2023 – a 422% increase – with non-binary identities up 1260% and transgender men quadrupling (309%), driven by social media echo chambers and peer pressure. Gallup's 2025 poll shows LGBTQ+ identification at 9.3% overall, nearly triple 3.5% in 2012, doubling in five years, with over 23% of Gen Z (born 1997-2006) identifying as such. The Williams Institute's 2025 poll estimates over 724,000 transgender youth. This confusion pushes youth toward drastic measures like mutilative surgeries and fuels mental health crises. Rising detransition rates underscore the error; tragically, only 13% of detransitioners receive support from LGBT organizations versus 51% during transition, a shameful abandonment of distressed young people.

To understand the remedy, we must first acknowledge the causes. Never forget that the COVID-19 pandemic mismanagement inflicted catastrophic damage on Gen Z, an epic loss of society's moral compass that left Gen Z adrift. Professors, teachers, and doctors backed isolation, disregarding known lockdown harms even though Gen Z was at exceptionally low risk from COVID. Mental health crises exploded: self-harm in teens doubled to tripled vs. 2019, overdoses surged 40-120%, and anxiety skyrocketed. One in four college-aged kids contemplated suicide by June 2020. Few discuss that Sweden kept schools open and reported low damage to youth mental health.

Inflammatory rhetoric from America's left has influenced this weakened generation and likely inspired violence. Is it only a coincidence that members of Gen Z assassinated Charlie Kirk, attempted to kill President Trump, shot up schools, and murdered United Healthcare's CEO? Media bias is stark and quantifiable: from 2016

to 2025, "extreme right" or "far right" mentions outnumbered "extreme left" or "far left" 5:1 (~12,000, with ~6 billion views, vs. ~2,500 with ~1.25 billion views); some, like MSNBC at 18:1 and PBS at 42:1, were far worse. Extreme demonization of Trump or MAGA conservatives as "[fascists](#)" or "threat to democracy" – MSNBC's ~10,500 segments (~5.2 billion views), The New York Times' ~620 mentions (~310 million views), and President Joe Biden's 2022 Philadelphia speech, where he declared that "Donald Trump and the MAGA Republicans represent an extremism that threatens the very foundations of our republic," a message reiterated in over 15 major addresses from 2020–2025 – has legitimized violent action.

Gen Z is naturally influenced by professors, but today's professors are steeped in extremism rather than a force for free debate. We should be alarmed at [statistics](#) like 95% of Stanford faculty voted Democrat in 2020 per [Rabushka](#); 63% of students accept shouting down speakers, 34% deem violence acceptable to suppress speech (up from 20% in 2020), and 48% justify political violence.

Elite university leadership continues to abrogate its responsibility by ignoring Charlie Kirk's assassination. Not a single Top 20 school offered any mental health support despite obvious on-campus impact, in contrast with extensive wellness outreach for their left-favored crises, including George Floyd's death and both of President Trump's elections.

Some call for legal, top-down interventions, but ultimately, it is individuals, not institutions, who will save freedom. Despite their damaged psyches, the durable solution is present in Gen Z itself. Charlie Kirk knew that and devoted his life to fearlessly engaging Gen Z in debate. That empowered his audience to think critically about liberty, morality, and truth. Charlie's death sparked 50,000+ TPUSA chapter requests in six days – their thirst for dialogue is evident.

In that spirit, we must continue to challenge inquisitive students with ideas they may never have heard. And we should identify and mentor Gen Z's bold, rising leaders in early careers who've shown a commitment to critical thinking and free speech, to accelerate their rise into leadership across business, government, media, and beyond. Efforts like these demand courage – from us and from them – an attribute in short supply today. But as C.S. Lewis noted, "Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point."

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