

Matthew 6:1-15

1" Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. 2 "Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

5 "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7 "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9 Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread,

12 and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Week 5 - Personal Study

Prayer, Father - Matthew 6:1-15

Day 1:

Find a quiet spot if able to. The Bible tells us in Romans 8:26 that we do not know what God wants us to pray for, but that the Holy Spirit prays for us with groanings that can't be expressed in words. Ask Jesus to send the Holy Spirit to pray for you and guide you as you study His Word today and throughout the week.

Read or listen to Matthew 6:1-15 twice. The first time, let the words wash over you. The second time, pay close attention to verses 1 through 8.

In Week 3, Day 1, we saw that "righteousness" means *justice of which God is the source/author; approval of God; what is deemed right by the Lord after His examination; approved in His eye (correctness in thinking, feeling, acting)*. Did the people Jesus mentioned in verses 1-5 display this type of righteousness? Why or why not? What were their motives?

The same Greek word for "righteousness" is used in John 16:8 and 16:10 where Jesus tells His disciples that the Helper will come after He leaves them to go to the Father.

Read John 16:5-11. What's the background here? What important events have taken place? Answering the questions, Who is involved? What is happening? Where is Jesus going? When did this take place?, may be helpful in understanding this passage.

Look up "Helper/Advocate" in John 16:7 and write your findings here.

In John 16:8-11, we learn that the Helper will convict the world of three things. What are they?

The Amplified Bible translates John 16:11 this way:

about judgment [the certainty of it], because the ruler of this world (Satan) has been judged and condemned.

What does this mean to us as believers? How should we approach every day the Lord gives us in regard to our sin nature? Invite the Helper to guide you as you ask Jesus to clarify what this truth means to you.

Reach out to a sister in the Lord or a member of the Ladies Ministry for prayer if you are not experiencing victory over the enemy and his kingdom in your life.

Review what you learned so far and meditate on the role the Holy Spirit plays in your life. Write your thoughts here.

Let's look up the word "hypocrites" in Matthew 6:2 to understand Jesus' warning to not be like them. What do you find?

Does this description apply to you at times? What is God showing you?

Let's go back to Matthew 6:1 to find the meaning of "reward" in the original Greek.

The English word "reward" is used a total of five times in today's passage (underline them in your text). However, the Greek word "misthos" we just looked up applies to only three of them. The Greek translation for "will reward you" in verses 4 and 6 is "apodidómi" which means:

- to give up, give back, return, restore; I give, render, as due; to return especially as a payment, in relation to the source of the giving back
- to give away for one's own profit what is one's own
- to pay off, discharge, what is due (because a debt, like a burden, is thrown off, by being paid)
- to requite, recompense, in a good or a bad sense

What do you notice about the reward we receive from mankind versus the reward we receive from our Heavenly Father? What strikes you? Journal your thoughts here as you go to the Lord in prayer.

Let's thank our Lord for revealing so much of Himself to us through His Word. And for how much He loves and cares about our well being. We are truly *blessed!*

Day 2:

Bring any thought you may be wrestling with to Jesus, asking Him to show you what He wants you to do about it. Thank Him for this time and invite the Helper to lead you to a deeper knowledge of the truths of God's Word.

Read or listen to Matthew 6:1-15 twice. The first time, let the words wash over you. The second time, pay close attention to verses 3 through 9.

What are three things Jesus says to do when praying in verses 6 through 8?

Let's look up "room/inner room" in the original Greek language and write what you find.

What do these definitions suggest the meaning of "room/inner room" is for us today?

Look up "secret" in verse 6 and write the definitions you find.

How does this clarify Jesus' teaching on how to pray? What does this mean to you?

Why does Jesus warn us about meaningless repetitions in verse 7? Look up “do not use meaningless repetitions” (or “do not heap up empty phrases” in some translations), for more insight on this.

Jesus is not telling us to stop asking for something more than once; on the contrary, He encourages His disciples to always pray and not give up. You can read/study about the persistent widow in Luke 18 or on our Lord asking the Father to remove the cup from Him three times in Matthew 26 for more details.

Ask God to show you how Jesus’ teaching about motives and methods for prayer relate to you. Is there something specific He wants you to address? Is there something He wants you to embrace? Journal about it here.

Let's now turn our attention to the word "Father". Jesus tells us in verses 6 through 8 to pray to our Father who is in secret and who knows what we need before we ask him. He also starts the "Lord's Prayer" with "Our Father in heaven". Look up "Father" in these verses and write the definitions you find from the Greek word "patér" that are speaking to your heart.

In Week 3, Day 2, we learned who a "son" is (applies to female believers). We saw that the Father who adopted us as His daughters is trustworthy.

The everlasting God, the great I AM, the One who created the world in six days, walked with Abraham, Moses, David, and the others, who offered redemption through Christ to all who believe, provided (and still does) for His people in miraculous ways, this God, is **OUR** father, **YOUR** father. Let that sink in for a minute.

He imparted life to you, passing on the potential for likeness.

- Then the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nostrils, and the man became a living person. (Gen 2:7) NLT
- So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Gen 1:27)
- You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. (Ps 139:13) NLT

He adopted you into His family.

- God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. (Eph 1:5) NLT
- God sent him [Jesus] to buy freedom for us who were slaves to the law, so that he could adopt us as his very own children. (Gal 4:5) NLT
- So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." (Rom 8:15) NLT

He loves you and provides for your future. *(In fact, your Heavenly Father loves you SO MUCH that He sent His only begotten Son to die on a cross to pay for your sin (couldn't do it yourself) so you can be made righteous and spend eternity with Him.)*

- For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (Jn 3:16)
- But he [Jesus] was pierced for our rebellion, crushed for our sins. He was beaten so we could be whole. He was whipped so we could be healed. (Isa 53:5) NLT
- For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jer 29:11)

He delights in you and wants a close, intimate, relationship with you.

- For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs." (Zep 3:17) NLT
- If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! (Mat 7:11)
- "They will be my people," says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. "On the day when I act in judgment, they will be my own special treasure. I will spare them as a father spares an obedient child. (Mal 3:17) NLT
- Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. (Jam 1:17) NLT

Once we understand this, once we really get it, it changes everything!

Reread the verses above and insert “Me/My/I” or your name.

E.g.: Then the LORD God formed *Me/Name* from the dust of the ground. He breathed the breath of life into *My/Name’s* nostrils, and *I/Name* became a living person. (Gen 2:7)

What is God telling you? Share your feelings and thoughts below.

Some of us were not raised by our biological father, or didn’t have a father who measured up to our expectations. Reflect on what you learned about God as father and compare that to your experience of an earthly father. Journal similarities and differences.

Go to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to reveal to you if your perspective of God as father has been affected by your perception of your earthly father (or lack of one). How was it affected? If need be, ask your Heavenly Father to begin or continue to heal in this area.

Day 3:

Quiet the world around you. Thank your Heavenly Father for this new day He is giving you to get to know Him better. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you if there is sin in your heart. Talk to God about it and receive His forgiveness as you stand blameless before Him. Thank Jesus for the strength He gives you to do all things through Him and invite the Holy Spirit’s guidance into your study.

Read or listen to Matthew 6:9-15.

Now, look over your words and definitions. From the definitions that resonate with you, write out the Lord's Prayer replacing the words/phrases in orange or peach highlight with YOUR selected Greek definitions. You will end up with a rich reading of the Lord's Prayer including definitions from the original Greek language!

Now reread Matthew 6:12-15 with Greek translations in mind. What stands out to you? What occurs to you about the nature of transgressions? What implication does this have for you being forgiven and forgiving others?

EXERCISE: (optional)

Read through the directions below once. Select a time to complete this exercise. If you have limited time, set a timer. When ready, go through each section at your own pace. Journal your thoughts, feelings, and interactions with the Lord.

Go as far as you are comfortable. It may take you several times to go through each step. Let us know if you can't complete this exercise.

Spending time with your Heavenly Father

Find a quiet place, take a few deep breaths to calm your heart and your mind. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide you as you seek to interact with your Heavenly Father. Ask the Holy Spirit to guard this time, to remove interruptions, and stop any thought that exalts itself against the knowledge of God. Concentrate on your breathing. Thank the One who gave you the breath of life for this precious gift. Imagine yourself (alone) with your Heavenly Father. Give yourself time and room to connect with your Father. Soak in this moment. How are you feeling?

If afraid or anxious, invite Jesus in this time and ask Him to reveal to you the source of your fear or anxiety. Call a trusted friend to discuss this with her or ask her to pray with you.

Can you sense your Heavenly Father's presence? Ask Jesus to allow only the Spirit of God, only the love of God, between you and your Father, and to guard this time. Bask in your Father's presence; take it in, receive His warmth, and bathe in His goodness. Are there negative thoughts popping in your mind? If yes, read the message under *Negative Thoughts* (below) and let the truths of God's Word speak to your heart.

If a specific sin or thought keeps coming back, take a few moments to tell God about it (He already knows, He just wants you to acknowledge it and talk to Him about it).

Move closer to Him. Can you imagine yourself holding His hand? In His arms? Now talk to Him. You can start with saying, *Hi!* You can tell Him what you know about Him (You are HOLY, you are LOVING, you are TRUSTWORTHY, etc.). If you don't know what to say, tell Him exactly that. You can share with Him recent joys and struggles, talk about decisions you have to make (big and small). Take some time to be silent and bask in His presence, in His love for you. Then listen, listen intently. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you quiet your own voice/thoughts and to let you hear the voice of your Father. Listen, listen intently, listen purposely. If you don't hear anything, it's okay. Enjoy His presence.

Negative thoughts:

I'm a sinner; not worthy; God wouldn't want anything to do with me; I'm not good enough, not important enough, not - - - enough; can I really trust God?; I've been hurt plenty of times, I don't want to get close to anyone; He will let me down.

Read "Five Biblical Responses to Lies We Tell Ourselves" from Word of Life Bible Institute. Click the link below (if online) or type the following website's URL into a browser's address bar and press Enter:

<https://wordoflife.edu/you-say-god-says-five-biblical-responses-to-lies-we-tell-ourselves/>

Going Deeper:

- Memorize Matthew 6:1-15
- Word searches / Look up the meaning of additional promising words; ones that may reveal important truths from God's treasure box

Week 6 - Personal Study

Making Disciples - Matthew 28:16-20

Day 1:

Start your time with the Lord in prayer. You can pray the following or use your own words:

Lord, show me what You want me to see in these scriptures today. I want to hear from you. I want to be directed by you. Let not my will, but your will be done in my mind and heart in our time together and my life.

Read or listen to Matthew 28:16-20 twice. The first time, let the words wash over you, the second time, listen to what the Lord is telling you.

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. 17 And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. 18 And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

The context of this Great Commission given to the Lord's disciples (to us as well if we are His disciples) is at the point in time where Jesus has risen from the dead. The people are witnessing Jesus alive after seeing Him die in a most devastating way. The miracle they are witnessing is beyond comprehension, but is nonetheless before their physical sight.

Before we dive into the Great Commission, we will pause and observe the two subgroups within the group of 11 disciples.

Read Matthew 28:17 again. Who were the two subgroups making up this group?

Let's learn about these two groups. Look up "him, they worshiped". What do you learn about this phrase from the Greek definitions?

Look up "doubted/doubtful". What does this word literally mean? What do you learn about this group? What are they wavering between (struggling with)?

Now, let's flesh out what this word "doubt" means by looking up the only other place it is found in Scripture.

Read Matthew 14:31 (context: Mat 14:22-33)

Who was doubting? What do we know about this man from our study this winter or from reading the Scriptures? Was he a dedicated follower who gave up his life for Jesus or a curious observer of Jesus' ministry?

In Matthew 14:31, Jesus refers to Peter as "you of little faith". This phrase occurs five times in the New Testament and each time with Jesus rebuking the problem of *failing to hear His voice*.

Look up "little faith" on Bible Hub (oligópistos). Not much is given besides the word origin "oligópistia". Click on this Greek word and write the definitions you find for "little faith".

What caused Peter to doubt? What was he vacillating between?

Peter asked for Jesus to “save” him in verse 30. What definitions do you find from the original Greek language?

Did Jesus respond to that cry? What is the implication for us when we are vacillating between trusting the Lord and another way? Remember Peter is Jesus’ disciple, as we are if we have surrendered to Him.

Now, go back to Matthew 28:17. Read only this verse. Then read it in context (Mat 28:16-20). After digging into this word “doubt”, what stands out to you now? Bring your thoughts to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to help you find the answer to these questions:

- Where am I wavering between fully trusting You and trusting in myself?
- How am I shifting between keeping my eyes on You in trust and clinging to something else?

We left off on Day 1 where Jesus is speaking to His 11 disciples after His resurrection and before His return to God the Father. The group was full of worshippers, yet some were uncertain at this crossroads because they were literally refusing to choose the Lord's way over another way.

Let's dig into what Jesus communicated to this group.

In Matthew 28:18, Jesus speaks to the WHOLE group, not just the worshippers. Look up the phrase "said to them" for its meaning.

At this point, Jesus' time in a physical sense is coming to an end with His followers. And here, He is bringing His physical ministry to closure with words that will bring closure to His message. This gives one pause to listen. Remember that He is speaking to His disciples. If you profess to follow Him, you too are given this message. Imagine yourself on that mountain, at His feet, listening... Journal your thoughts and feelings here.

Ask the Lord prayerfully to reveal to you what He wants you to discover from the following verses.

Read Matthew 28:18-20. Read it through a second time. What strikes you? Write any thoughts or questions here.

Let's flesh out a few words/phrases and see what we find when we look up their Greek definitions. Write what you learn about each one.

Look up "authority" in verse 18

Look up "and make disciples" in verse 19

Look up "them to observe" in verse 20

Now reread Matthew 28:18-20 again. What comes up for you after doing these word searches? Spend time in prayer talking to the Lord about what came up.

Day 3:

Start your time in prayer. Invite the Lord into this time and ask for His direction and presence. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead your times of reflection and prayer today.

Read or listen to Matthew 28:16-20 twice. The first time, let the words wash over you, the second time, listen to what Jesus is telling you.

We have been sitting with Jesus' last command for His disciples. The commands were given to a mixed crowd; of worshippers and those divided between following Jesus' way or another way. Knowing the hearts of His listeners, Jesus says, "I am with you always, to the end of the age". Let's look into this comfort. Look up "with you always" in the original Greek. What do you find?

What does this suggest in regard to each and every situation we could find ourselves in?

Jesus was clear HOW He'd be with us always as we serve as His witnesses. Acts 1:8 has much to say about this. Read Acts 1:1-11. Jesus is physically leaving earth, but is showing His disciples (us included) HOW He will remain with us.

In Acts 1:8, what will empower His disciples (us included) to be His witnesses?

Let's flesh out Acts 1:8. Look up "you will receive" in the original Greek. What do you learn about the receiver's role in receiving power from the Holy Spirit?

Now look up "power" in Acts 1:8. Write what you learn.

Is this power through our ability or God's ability?

When we are apprehensive about sharing the gospel and witnessing to others, whose power are we insecure about? God's or our own?

If we are insecure about our own ability or knowledge, what are we REALLY saying about God's power in us? What are we believing in light of Jesus' promise in Matthew 28:30 to always be with us in all individual ways? Journal your thoughts here.

Is my doubt in my own abilities reflecting a doubt in His ability to work in and through my broken self by His Holy Spirit? Am I wavering/vacillating between focusing on His WAY through me or my own brokenness and weaknesses, my BROKEN WAY.

Bring this prayer to the Lord (or use your own words).

Dear Jesus, where are my eyes focused on when presented with Your command to witness to the ends of the earth? Lord speak to me. Minister to my spirit. Show me if I am focusing on my limitations instead of your present power that you promise is in me when I become yours. Show me if there is any false way in me that needs confessing.

Confess anything the Lord brings to your mind. Receive His forgiveness. Ask the Lord to increase your faith and trust in His ability to work in your brokenness. Journal what comes up for you.

Going Deeper:

- Memorize Matthew 28:16-20
- Look up the meaning of other promising words
- Read commentaries on the Great Commission

Week 7 - Personal Study

Reflection and Prayer

Day 1:

We have been sitting at the feet of Jesus for seven weeks, learning from Him, growing in our understanding of who He is, who the Father is, and who the Holy Spirit is. Through God's Word, we were challenged, encouraged, convicted, comforted, transformed. We learned new things about who we are and what God wants from each of us as He is molding us into the image of His Son, and sending us to a dying world as His witnesses in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This week, we will take time to reflect on the things Jesus showed us and what they mean for us, first individually and then collectively.

Weeks 1-3

Start your time in the Word with prayer.

Read Matthew 5:1-12

Review your personal study and class notes from the Beatitudes. What stood out to you or spoke to your heart? Which word definitions brought a new understanding of God's Word? What did Jesus reveal to you? How did studying this portion affect your walk with the Lord and others?
