

The Parchment

Studies for making fully devoted followers of Christ



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Powerful Prayer

Matthew 6:1-18

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Using This Study

① EXAMINE His Word

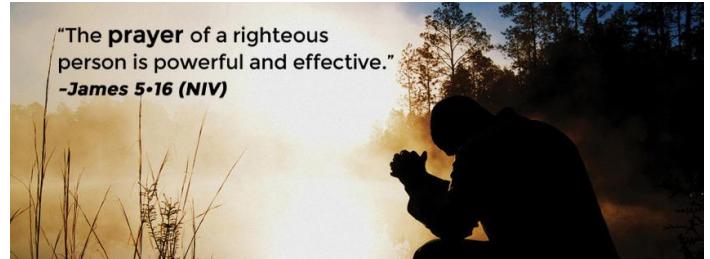
What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

② EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

③ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



This week we will look at a section of the Sermon on the Mount that gives instruction for prayer, giving and fasting. The theme that Jesus has shown throughout the sermon is that He values the condition of the heart even more than actions. All three of these things (prayer, giving and fasting) should be done as an act of reverence to God. It is not about what other people think, it is about your relationship with God. Jesus says that if we are trying to get praise from people then we have already received our reward. But if we are sincere when we pray and fast, not worrying about what people think, then God will hear our prayer. Join us this week as we talk about how to make sure our prayers, giving, and fasting are more about God and less about people.

BUT WHEN YOU PRAY,
GO INTO YOUR ROOM,
CLOSE THE DOOR AND
PRAY TO YOUR FATHER,
WHO IS UNSEEN.
THEN YOUR FATHER,
WHO SEES WHAT IS DONE
IN SECRET,
WILL REWARD YOU.

MATTHEW 6:6

Matthew 6:1-18 New English Translation

Pure-hearted Giving

6 “Be careful not to display your righteousness merely to be seen by people. Otherwise you have no reward with your Father in heaven. **2** Thus whenever you do charitable giving, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in synagogues and on streets so that people will praise them. I tell you the truth, they have their reward. **3** But when you do your giving, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, **4** so that your gift may be in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

Private Prayer

5 “Whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray while standing in synagogues and on street corners so that people can see them. Truly I say to you, they have their reward. **6** But whenever you pray, go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you. **7** When you pray, do not babble repetitiously like the Gentiles, because they think that by their many words they will be heard. **8** Do not be like them, for

your Father knows what you need before you ask him. **9** So pray this way:

Our Father in heaven, may your name be honored,

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

11 Give us today our daily bread,

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

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

14 “For if you forgive others their sins,

your heavenly Father will also forgive you. **15** But if you do not forgive others,

your Father will not forgive you your sins.

Proper Fasting

16 “When you fast, do not look sullen like the hypocrites, for they make their faces unattractive so that people will see them fasting. I tell you the truth, they have their reward. **17** When you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, **18** so that it will not be obvious to others when you are fasting, but only to your Father who is in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.

① EXAMINE His Word (Observation) (For personal preparation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the foregoing passage.

1. Who is involved in the text? Author, audience, main characters.
 2. Where and when is this taking place? Geography and timeline.
 3. What actions are carried out or commanded? Look for the verbs.
 4. Is there anything repeated?
 5. What is emphasized?
 6. Is there anything in these passages that is related to other areas of scripture?
 7. Are there things to be noted that are alike or unalike such as similes and metaphors?

② EXPLORE His Word (Interpretation) (For Community Group discussion)

What does God MEAN?

8. What does the left hand and right hand represent in verse 3?

9. Why should we pray in secret?

10. Does this mean we should not pray in public?

11. What are the key elements in the prayer that is given as an example?

12. What is the purpose of not telling people we are fasting? Should we ever tell people we are fasting? Are there examples of groups of people fasting?

③ EMBRACE His Word (Application) (For Community Group discussion)
Why does this MATTER to me?

13. How do you define a successful prayer life?

14. When do you find yourself the most successful in your prayer life?

15. When should we fast?

16. What is the purpose of fasting?

17. How does our relationship with God impact our relationship with others?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage

Write about what God wants you to KNOW, to FEEL, and to DO...

SERMON NOTES