



RELIGIOUS ACTS

and Prayer



Study Eight
Matthew 6: 1-18



Introduction

Let's delve into Matthew 6:1-18, a passage from the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus addresses personal righteous acts in the areas of giving, praying, and fasting. His central teaching emphasizes avoiding ostentatious displays of piety and seeking to please God rather than impressing others.

This guide will first examine the passage as a whole and then return to focus on the Lord's Prayer.

Group Study

1. Begin by reading Matthew 6:1-18 and imagine hearing these words as an early disciple of Jesus. What are some initial thoughts and questions that come to mind as you read this passage? What are some keywords that frequently occur in this passage?
2. In Matthew 6:1, Jesus warns against performing righteous acts merely to be seen by others. What happens when pious acts are performed for others to see? What is the reward when good works are done for others to see?
3. From Matthew 6:2-18, Jesus expounds on the previous verse through 3 examples of performing righteous acts: giving, praying, and fasting. A hypocrite is commonly defined as "a person who says one thing and does another." How does this align with Jesus' definition of a hypocrite? What does the hypocrite say and do that are misaligned in Jesus' examples?
4. What are some examples of praise from people? What are the reasons that Jesus says to avoid this type of praise? What happens when righteous acts are done in secret, so that no person sees? Is it possible to get praise from both people and God?

5. Earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says in Matthew 5:16 “In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” How do believers find the right balance between being a light of the world and doing righteous acts in secret? How do the motivations of the heart factor in?
6. The Lord’s Prayer in Matthew 6:9-13 serves as a model prayer that Jesus taught His disciples.
 - a. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
 - i. What does it mean for God’s name to be “hallowed” (make holy)?
 - ii. How can we honor and revere God’s name in our daily lives?
 - b. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
 - i. What does it mean to seek God’s kingdom and will?
 - ii. How can we align our desires with God’s purposes?
 - c. Give us this day our daily bread.
 - i. How does this petition acknowledge our dependence on God?
 - ii. How can we trust God for our daily needs?
 - d. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
 - i. Why is forgiveness essential in our relationship with God and others?
 - ii. How can we extend forgiveness to those who have wronged us?
 - e. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
 - i. How can we actively resist temptation?
 - ii. What role does God play in protecting us from evil?

Personal Reflection

1. Take some time to reflect on your motivations for performing spiritual acts such as giving, praying, and fasting. What insights do you receive?
2. How does Matthew 6:8 “...for your Father knows what you need before you ask him” give you comfort?
3. In Matthew 6:14-15, Jesus discusses forgiving others of their debts against us. Are there people in your life that you need to forgive?

Prayer

