

Introduction:

- A young man went into a drugstore to buy 3 boxes of chocolate: small, medium, and large. When the pharmacist asked him about the three boxes, he said, "Well...I am going over to my new girlfriend's house tonight for supper. Then we are going out for the evening. If she only lets me hold her hand, then I'll give her the small box. If she lets me kiss her on the cheek...then I'll give her the medium box. But if she really lets me smooch seriously, I'll give her the large box". He made his purchase and left. That evening as he sat down for dinner with his girlfriend's family, he asked if he could say the prayer before the meal. He began to pray...and he prayed a most earnest, and intense prayer...that lasted for almost five minutes. When he finished his new girlfriend said, "You never told me you were such a religious person." He said,"And you never told me...your dad was a pharmacist!"
 - It is essential to pray...whatever the circumstances!
- The discourse in chapter 6 now changes to warn against a wrong kind of 'righteousness' vs 6:1 which is undertaken to gain human approval and not to be conformed to the will of God. Jesus is always after the heart of the matter.
 - Those who practice this kind of righteousness, a 'righteousness to be seen, are called 'hypocrites'. A word that occurs often in Matthew—6 times in chapter 23 alone.
 - Hypocrite - In classical Greek it spoke of an actor. A person playing another's part. Not the real person that is seen. "The jarring contradiction between precept and practice." Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (p. 1236). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.
 - Pharisaical righteousness focuses on external and not inward depth.
 - The disciples are not to be like them (scribes and pharisees.)
- The focus of this chapter, 6, moves from the heart change which shapes a righteous behavior to the actual practice of 'righteousness' that flows out of a changed heart/God like heart.
- As always, Jesus is after the heart. And we find now three discipline he expects he disciples to practice. Going, Praying, Fasting. When done to an Audience of One, the Father rewards us.

I. When You Pray

A. Don't approach God this way:

B. Don't be a hypocrite.

1. Don't be an actor, playing a role. Be the real you. IL. Robert Duval, the Apostle. Play the part of a failing preacher in life, but was incredibly real before God. IL. "Yes, Lord. It's me Sonny."

2. God really wants us to approach Him as real because God wants a real relationship.

C. Don't babble on like those of other religions do (like the gentiles). He is referring to those outside of the discipleship community.

1. Because they are outside of the disciple community, they do not know God.

Therefore, instead of trusting God to hear them they badge God to act on their behalf like He is some kind of reluctant deity.

2. Their approach to God is therefore twofold: babbling (noisy flow of sound without meaning) and with many words. IL. It is like 'filibustering God'. Wear Him down with words.
3. The issue is not the method or frequency of prayer but are we in the attitude of faith which should be inspiring us. Because God carries the loving concern of a Father. And not only that, He know everything even before we ask. So, given those two things why would we approach God with many words and babbling? Jesus simply says...

D. Don't be like them

II. Pray This Way

- A. Proper prayer, right praying is simply the approach to God as an expression of trust in relationship to Him as 'Father.' This is real! It is not mechanical!
- B. The call is to the secret place of prayer not silent place prayer.
 1. Secret place prayer is simply prayer that is not prayed before the crowds for them to see.
 2. In the secret place, the follower of Jesus encounters God who is in 'secret'! The God who is 'invisible' is the opposite of the hypocrite who encounters the 'visible' crowd.
- C. Jesus gives them a model prayer to pray. It is not to become a repetitive prayer though it is certainly o.k. to pray. In Matthew, it is as smooth as Jesus teaching in verse 8 and rolling into verse 9. *"Your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask Him! Pray like this..."*
 1. What Jesus is saying is that the following words will express trust in a heavenly Father which has been stated in vss. 7,8 to be the basis of prayer.
 2. In the model prayer, Jesus says, "this is what a Father - child relationship sounds like."
- D. The Model prayer:
 1. Our Father, may your name be kept holy. This segment is about honoring God. I praise Him here. I remember His goodness.
 - a) By faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus I have been adopted into the family... Father!
 - b) I remember the names of God. They are covenant names that God uses of himself.
 - 1) Jehovah Tsidkenu - God of my righteousness
 - 2) Jehovah M'kaddish - God who sanctifies.
 - 3) Jehovah Shalom - God my peace
 - 4) Jehovah Shaman - God who is always there.
 - 5) Jehovah Rophe - God who heals
 - 6) Jehovah Jireh - God who provides.
 - 7) Jehovah Nissi - God my banner

- 8) Jehovah Rohi - God my shepherd.
2. Your kingdom come, your will be done. My life, family, church, nation
3. Give us this day our daily bread. I am trusting you to supply today the most basic of my needs. If I can trust you in this I can trust you in other things.
4. And forgive us our sins as we have forgiven those who sin against us.
 - a) Ask for forgiveness.
 - b) Forgive others and release them
 - c) Set your heart to forgive those who sin against you. For me personally, this has been the most impacted in my life.
5. Don't let us yield to temptation but deliver us from the evil one.
 - a) Put on the armor of God.
 - b) Put a hedge of protection around you and your family.

III. **Make Sure You Forgive**

- A. Sin/trespass, Parapipto - to slip, to fall, to fall into guilt or shame. It literally means to forgive those who miss the mark with you and are guilty of offense.
- B. We are forgiven by the Father, therefore we should most certainly forgive those who offend us. Where forgiveness is asked for and grace is extended, relationships are always mended. Remember that the next time you ask Father for forgiveness or a brother or sister.
- C. Why all the commentary on prayer and not giving and fasting? Simple: Prayer is personal with God. Face to face. It is really hard to talk with someone when you have issues with them. Prayer, of the three disciplines of chapter 6, is most personal.