

Matthew 6:1-18, Religious Duties, and the LORD's Prayer

This section has the bookends of Matthew 6:1, "do not practice righteousness in front of others, otherwise you will have no reward from God," with 6:16-18, "(do not show your fasting to people... If you do that is your reward)." But obeying this results in a reward from God. The Lord's prayer is bracketed by a format of instruction that follows this model:

1. The **What**, "whenever you... Search for (6:2,5,6,7,16)
2. The **Prohibition**, "do not..." (6:2,5,7,16)
3. The **Motivation** behind the prohibited action, "to be admired by others" (6:1,2,5,16)
4. The **Result**, "they have their reward" (6:2,5,16)

On the other hand, this is contrasted with the correct behavior to honor God in this format:

1. The **Contrast**, "but when you say..." (6:3,6,9,17)
2. The **Commanded Secret Activity** (6:3,6,9,17)
3. The **Motivation** behind the righteous action, "so your father sees you" (6:3,6,18)
4. The **Result**, "your Father will reward you." (6:4,6,18)

The outline for Matthew 6:1-18:

- A. The principal theme of what Jesus commands us not to do (6:1)
- B. Three specific practices (6:2-18)
 1. Charity (6:2-4) *giving to the poor*
 2. Prayer (6:5-15)
 - a. Two contrasts: Hypocrisy versus Privacy (6:5-8)
 - b. The Lord's Prayer (6:9-15)
 - (1) Priorities: Three petitions for God's glory "(Your Name/ Kingdom/will)" (6:9-10)
 - (2) Problems: Three petitions for personal needs "give, forgive, deliver" (6:11-13)
 - c. The reason for praying this way (6:14-15)
 3. Fasting (6:16-18)

Matthew 6:1-18

1 "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven. 2 So whenever you give to the poor, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 3 But when you give to the poor, don't 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 "Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7 When you pray, don't babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they'll be heard for their many words. 8 Don't be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.

9 "Therefore, you should pray like this:

Our Father in heaven, your Name be honored as holy. 10 Your kingdom come. 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 also have forgiven our debtors. 13 And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

14 “For if you forgive others their offenses, your heavenly Father will forgive you as well. 15 But if you don’t forgive others, your Father will not forgive your offenses.

16 “Whenever you fast, don’t be gloomy like the hypocrites. For they disfigure their faces so that their fasting is obvious to people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that your fasting isn’t obvious to others but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Synoptic Parallels: Mark 11:25-26, Luke 11:2-4

Contrasts:

Matthew	Mark	Luke
6:9-15 context is to those assembled on the Mount		11:1-4 context is to the disciples
6:11 <i>today</i>		11:3 <i>each day</i>
6:12 <i>debts/debtors</i>		11:4 <i>sins/everyone</i>
6:14 <i>trespasses</i>	11:25 “if you have <u>anything</u> to say against <u>anyone</u> ”	
6:14 “if you forgive, your Father will” (passive voice)	11:25 “forgive, so that your Father will” (imperative voice)	

Note on translation:

The King James version of Matthew 6:18 uses a Greek manuscript with (ἐν τῷ φανερόν. – en to phanero) “in the open,” (Greek Orthodox Church 1904, Scrivener’s Textus Receptus 1894, Stephanus Textus Receptus 1550, Beza Greek New Testament 1598). Most other modern translations use more current Greek manuscripts (i.e., NIV and CSB), which do not include this final element of the sentence. The implication is significant because we’re commanded in this passage “not” to do things “in the open.” Comprehending this distinction (where “in the open” is included versus where it is not) suggests that we should not seek for God to honor us in public; however, it is at His discretion to do so should He so choose. *This isn’t merely a distinction between translations, this difference is in the text of the “original” Greek sources.

Whether you interpret this passage to mean that it is our obligation to pray The LORD’s Prayer verbatim, or as a model, the principle should be considered for other petitions we would bring to God. Following the format of first giving glory to God in our address of Him, and then addressing our personal needs for 1) provision, 2) forgiveness, and 3) righteous living, is the example Christ gave us for “how we are supposed to pray.” (Matthew 6:9 *pray like this*; Luke 11:1-2 *Lord teach us to pray- whenever you pray, say...*)

Matthew 6:9-15 context is to those assembled on the mount - Luke 11:1-4 context is to the disciples, who asked Jesus to teach them to pray, just as John (the Baptist) taught his disciples.

Matthew 6:11 today - Luke 11:3 each day

Matthew 6:12 debts/debtors - Luke 11:4 sins/everyone

Matthew 6:14 trespasses - Mark 11:25 "if you have anything to say against anyone"

Matthew 6:14 "if you forgive, your Father will" (passive voice) - Mark 11:25 "forgive, so that your Father will" (imperative voice)