

## Matthew 6

By Max Klein

**6:1. “Beware, that you do not practice your righteousness before men to be noticed by them, otherwise [if you do not heed this warning] you have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.**

Grammar: Verbs of caution such as “beware” take the Greek particle “me” (μή) with the infinitive.

Practicing righteousness in order to be noticed by men, for example, performing good deeds and prayers in order to receive the approbation of mankind, will not be rewarded by God because the believer is out of fellowship with God and under the control of his sin nature. God does not and will not reward a believer functioning under the lusts of his sin nature. Only the good deeds and Biblically correct prayers of the believer in fellowship will be rewarded by God the Father.

A Christian motivated by illicit desire (lust) from the sin nature cannot please the Lord. Only a Christian applying God’s word by means of the power of the Holy Spirit (i.e. under the Filling Ministry of the Holy Spirit) can please Him. If the Christian is motivated by approbation lust he is living to please people rather than to please the Lord. (There are times we can please both simultaneously. For example, a Christian husband who loves his wife as Christ loves the Church pleases both the Lord and his wife.) The Christian is either a servant of the Lord or a slave to the lusts of the sin nature.

**6:2. “So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do [the word “hypocrites” is a reference to the Pharisees and scribes: Matthew 23:13] in the synagogues and in the streets so that they may be honored by men [Matthew 23:5-7]. Truly I say to you they have their reward in full.”**

Religious people (those persons, both believers and unbelievers alike, who seek the approbation of God outside of God’s plan) are not rewarded by God, but by whatever satisfaction or pseudo happiness they obtain by fulfilling some lust. For example, many Christians spend their entire lives seeking human approbation rather than seeking the approbation of the Lord via the execution of the spiritual life. After helping the poor, they brag to others about their good deeds. They attend prayer meetings or all night prayer vigils for the sole purpose of being recognized by people as some great saint. Under compulsion, they contribute ten percent of their income to their local church. All this they do in ignorance of the spiritual life. These are religious people involved in religious functions outside of God’s plan, and therefore cannot be rewarded by Him.

**6:3, 4. “But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

Whatever good a believer does is a matter between him and the Lord, and should be done in private if possible. In that way, the believer can avoid false motivation. In the ancient world, the right hand represented doing something good while the left hand represented doing something bad or evil. In this idiom, the right hand doing something without the left hand knowing about it represents doing something with proper motivation. On the other hand, the right hand [doing a right thing] telling the left hand [doing something in a wrong way] means that the person is introducing false motivation into the matter.

Giving to the poor may be God's will for you or it may not be. Giving to the poor is a good thing if it is God's will, but keep in mind that a good or right thing must be done in a right way to be right. If giving is done in a right way, then it is rewardable. However, there are times when giving is a wrong thing. For example if a Christian man gives a financial offering to a church or to a charitable cause while not properly providing for his family, he is committing an evil act. "He is worse than an unbeliever," 1st Timothy 5:8b states.

This type of evil giving is certainly not God's will and as such is punishable from the supreme court of heaven. Giving in secret, on the other hand, keeps false motivation from entering your soul. Jesus has just attacked the ostentatious public giving of the Pharisees and scribes (Matt. 6:2). Now, he is going to attack their falsely motivated public prayers (Matthew 6:5-8).

**6:5. "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites [Pharisees and scribes] for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen of men [motivated by approbation lust]. Truly I say to you they have their reward in full [human approbation].**

**6:6. "But you, when you pray, go into your private room [Jesus places the emphasis on private prayers, not public]; after closing the door [the aorist participle] pray [main verb] to your Father in secret, and your Father who sees [what is accomplished] in secret will reward you.**

There is a Greek rule of grammar established by the Greek grammarian Granville Sharp, namely the action of an aorist participle must precede the action of the main verb, regardless of the word order. So, the door must be closed before one begins praying. In this way, your prayers are completely in private. This is in contrast to the Pharisees praying in public for all to see.

The emphasis in Scripture is on private prayers though public prayer has a place in the plan of God as well. Many of the great prayers recorded in Scripture were private, for example what should be regarded as the true "Lord's Prayer" as found in John 17 and other private prayers of the Lord as found in Matthew 26:39, 42 and Luke 23:34. Paul's private prayers for the Ephesians are mentioned in Ephesians 1:16-19; 3:14-21, and his prayers for the unbelieving Jews in Romans 10:1. The great prayers of Moses are found in Exodus 32:11-13, and in Numbers 14:13-19. Regarding public prayer, the Jewish fasted and prayed to be delivered from the decree of King Xerxes which prayers were answered (Esther 4:16). On another occasion, the Lord rejected the public prayer of the Jews for deliverance as found in Jeremiah 14:12a, "When they fast [in order to concentrate on prayer] I am not going to listen to their cry [their prayers]. . . ." Certain members of the Antioch Church conducted public prayer regarding the selection of missionaries (Acts 13:2, 3). When Peter was imprisoned the Church fervently prayed for his release. Though they prayed fervently, they did not expect an answer to their prayers, a total lack of faith. Nevertheless, the Lord delivered Peter (Acts 12:5, 13-16). Both the Lord and Paul emphasized private praying (Matthew 6:6, I Thessalonians 5:17, 18).

Why the change of protocol in prayer? Prior to the Church Age, believers could pray to either God the Father or to God the Son (1 Kings 18:36; 1 Samuel 8:7-9; Genesis 18:23-33), whereas during the First Advent (Matthew 6:6) and during the Church Age (John 14:13-14) believers are instructed to pray to God the Father only. When Jesus Christ became the God-Man, he became a high priest in his humanity. As a high priest he no longer can be the object of prayer, but the channel by which we pray to God the Father.

**6:7, 8. “And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition [βατταλογεω / battalogo: as if you are stammering] as the Gentiles [unbelievers] do for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. “So, do not be like [do not imitate] them for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.**

The Greek word battalogo comes from “battos” and “logeo.” “Batos” was the name of the king of Cyrene who stammered. The noun “battos” took on the meaning of “stammerer,” and then the verb “logeo” (to speak) came to be combined with this noun to form the compound “battalogo” - meaning to speak in a stammer or to use meaningless repetition.

Because God has always known everything, repetition is not necessary when praying to the Father. Though God is omniscient, some believers blasphemously pray the same prayer over and over to the Father as if He were deaf or a slow learner. The Lord may punish your blasphemy, but he certainly will not reward it.

The so called “Lord’s Prayer” as found here in Matthew 6:9-13 was originally taught by Jesus to the Jews who should have been those believers defending Jerusalem just before the 2nd Advent. (Because the religious establishment rejected Christ as Messiah resulting in the intercalation of the Church Age the same prayer will be applicable under the same circumstances, only now to a future generation of Jewish believers.) The Lord taught this prayer as an example to illustrate certain concepts regarding prayer.

**6:9. “Pray, then in this manner [verses 9-13: a pattern prayer for the disciples], ‘Our Father who is in heaven; let your person [name] be set apart as virtuous [righteous and just].**

It seems that the Lord being omniscient took a future prayer and used it as a pattern prayer in teaching his disciples, a prayer which will be prayed possibly by one of the great Jewish generals defending Jerusalem just before the return of Christ at His Second Advent.

In the Millennium for the first time in history, the Father’s person will be revered. His righteous and just policy and thinking will be implemented by the perfect rule of our Lord Jesus Christ. And since the Word of God will be universally taught in the Millennium most will have great awe and respect for the Father.

Though this prayer cannot be prayed today, it could have been prayed during the early ministry of Christ or will be prayed toward the end of the Tribulation. In teaching about prayer, the Lord gives the disciples a pattern prayer which they could have prayed in his early ministry since the Messiah was on the earth and had not yet been rejected. If he had not been rejected, the Age of Israel would have been followed by the millennial reign of Christ, but since He was rejected the Church Age was intercalated. This prayer could also be prayed by believers at the close of the Tribulation when Jerusalem will find itself under a terrible and mighty siege, and possibly one of those future generals fighting in Jerusalem will pray this exact prayer.

**6:10. ‘Your kingdom come [the Millennial Kingdom]; let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**

In verses 9, 10, there are three aorist passive participles all dealing with the millennial reign of Christ.

1. Let your person be set apart as holy (as righteous and just: revered)
2. Let your kingdom come
3. Let your will be done on earth as it is in heaven

Satan is presently the ruler of the world (John 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4) and will continue to rule during the Church Age and the Tribulation. Therefore, during these two periods of history the above three aorist participles cannot and will not be fulfilled.

**6:11. 'Give to us [for our benefit: dative of advantage] tomorrow's bread, today.'** [Greek: Τὸν ἄρτον ἡμῶν τὸν ἐπιούσιον δὸς ἡμῖν σήμερον / ton arton hemon ton epiousion dos hemon semeron]

The Greek phrase "ton epiousion" (τὸν ἐπιούσιον: literally "the coming") means the "the next day or tomorrow." Thus, those praying this prayer were asking for their provisions one day in advance. Soldiers many times need to carry the next day's provisions. So, assuming this is a prayer from a great believer defending Jerusalem in the close of the Tribulation, it would make sense to ask for two days-supply of provisions whereas in the Church Age we are to focus on one day at a time.

**6:12. 'And forgive us our debts [Israel failed in their client nation responsibilities] as [introduces an analogy] we have forgiven our debtors.'**

This is not a tit for tat situation. It doesn't say, "Since we have done these things, do this for us" – rather, it is an analogy. If the Jewish believers who are finite and imperfect were able to forgive others in grace, and they did, then logically it follows that infinite and perfect God the Father would forgive them in grace.

Historically, five Jewish client nations have failed:

1. The Theocratic kingdom from Moses to Samuel.
2. The United Kingdom from Saul to Rehoboam.
3. The Northern kingdom from Jeroboam to Hoshea.
4. The Southern kingdom from Rehoboam to Zedekiah.
5. Judea, established in the post-exilic period from 516 BC to 70 AD.

God will forgive the Jews and restore Israel as the final client nation having special spiritual responsibilities for the duration of the Millennium.

**6:13. 'And do not bring us into [more] testing [Jerusalem under siege at the end of the Great Tribulation], but deliver us from the evil one [Satan who is always anti-Semitic will mobilized the armies of the world to destroy the Jews at the close of the Tribulation].'**

The Jews in Jerusalem will be under maximum pressure just before the Second Advent, and so will pray for quick return and deliverance (Christ returns at the 2nd Advent before the 7 years are complete according to Matthew 24:22).

**6:14, 15. For if you [disciples] forgive others for their transgressions [they are functioning in fellowship and operating under grace.] your heavenly Father will also forgive you [when you, disciples name your sins]. But if you do not forgive others [because of reaction leading to the arrogance skills and so refusing to name your sins], then your Father will not forgive your transgressions [because you refuse to use the recovery procedure as stated in 1 John 1:9].**

If a believer forgives others for the sins they commit against him, then he will remain in fellowship with God. However, if the believer reacts and enters into bitterness and so refuses to forgive others, then he loses his

fellowship with God. In other words, if the believer uses God's grace system he will receive the benefits of God's grace. Thus, the disciples must choose either God's grace system or man's system of legalism.

**6:16-18. When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do for they disfigure their faces** [as if they are suffering from hunger] **to show men that they are fasting. I tell you the truth; they have received their reward in full** [the approbation of mankind]. **But when you fast, put oil on your head** [shampoo your hair, apply hair tonic and comb it] **and wash your face so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting** [this is a private matter between you and God the Father], **but only to your Father who is unseen, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

Motivation is important in the spiritual life. When the believer does something to receive the approbation of mankind, he has false motivation. A believer with false motivation is a believer out of fellowship with God. On the other hand, a believer in fellowship seeks the approbation of God. Remember that the spiritual life is right thinking and right motivation, resulting in right decisions and actions.

Regarding fasting, there is no spiritual value in fasting as such for fasting is merely going without food. (Even the unbelievers fast for a variety of reasons.) However, the believer in fasting increases his ability to concentrate. Furthermore, fasting allows the believer to spend more time in Bible study or prayer since he is able to use the time that is normally spent on preparing for meals and eating (for some people this may be as much as three hours per day) for praying and Bible study. Thus, though there is no spiritual value in fasting (going without food) as such it can be used to gain more time for one's spiritual life.

**6:19. Stop storing up for yourselves treasures on earth** [a false scale of values] **where moth** [eats materialistic things] **and rust** [corrodes] **destroys, and where thieves dig through** [the walls] **and steal,**

**6:20. but store up** [accumulate] **for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth or rust destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal,**

**6:21. for where your treasure is** [what you consider most important], **there your heart** [location of the scale of values] **will be also.**

This passage, Matthew 6:19-21 is teaching correct values - spiritual values must have priority over temporal values. What is more important to you? Is completing the spiritual life and gaining eternal rewards more important than seeking the things of this earth and gaining temporal fame and wealth? If so, you will become a great believer. If not, you will be distracted by your concentration on the things of this world.

However, don't distort the meaning of this passage. It is not suggesting that you should sell your new car and beautiful home or to get rid of your bank account. That would be an idiotic application of this verse. It is merely teaching that the believer must have an eternal focus rather than a temporal earthly one. If you are so busy gaining wealth and so have no time to learn and complete the spiritual life, you have the wrong priorities and values.

**6:22. The eye is the lamp of the body** [reveals the capacity of the soul through animation or lack of it]. **If your eye is unblemished** [no mental attitude sins coming through from the soul etc.], **your whole body will be animated** [from soul capacity],

If there is light in your soul (God's Word circulating in stream of consciousness) then that light will shine through the lamp of your eyes because advanced Christians living the spiritual life are animated.

Unblemished cloth is used to illustrate a phenomenal spiritual life. In ancient times, people bought cloth over the counter. Sometimes the merchant selling the cloth would fold it in such a way as to hide the blemishes in the cloth. A blemish would be analogous to a sin or flaw in the soul. Thus, a blemished eye would imply a believer full of mental attitude sins such as anger, hatred, bitterness, jealousy, envy, vindictiveness, guilt etc. (a believer failing in the spiritual life). On the other hand, an unblemished eye reveals the absence of sins, and thus a believer with a great spiritual life.

**6:23. but if your eyes are evil** [the soul is demonized through demon influence] **your whole body will be full of darkness** [he lives in darkness]. **If then the light which is** [should be] **in you** [by analogy the eye is a lamp which operates from the light in the soul] **is darkness** [no light in the soul] **how great is the darkness** [the soul is full of darkness namely Satanic viewpoint which is transmitted through the eyes and affects the whole person: thinking, motivation, decisions and actions are in sync with Satanic viewpoint]?

**6:24. "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Mammona** [the Syrian god of wealth].

If we love the temporal things of this world and operate under the lusts of the sin-nature, we will never advance in the Father's plan. For example, if gaining wealth is the most important thing in life (cupidity), then we cannot serve God. It is a matter of priorities.

**6:25: For this reason, I say to you, stop worrying about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear** [God will provide the necessities of life under the concept of 'logistical grace']. **Is not life** [your soul] **more than food and your body** [the location of your soul] **more than clothes? Yes, of course** [the Greek structure demands an affirmative answer].

We are here to glorify God by means of our life and body namely to apply doctrine to our problems and pressures. We are not to use our soul-life or body to commit sins. The soul has an important function in God's plan for it is the key to the spiritual life of the believer. Thus, we are not to use the mentality of our soul to worry about a possible shortfall in food, drink and clothing.

**6:26: Look at the birds of the sky; they do not sow or reap or gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?**

This verse uses a logical thought process called *a fortiori*, a Latin phrase literally meaning "with greater reason" to produce an inescapable conclusion through comparison. If God provides for the birds (one of the least of His creatures), then *with greater reason* will he not provide for his royal family (his precious creatures)? If God provides for birds which he does not personally love, will he not provide for the believer whom he personally loves? The inescapable conclusion is "Of course He will."

**6:27: Which of you by worrying can add a day** [a small span of time] **to his life span** [another meaning: can add 18 inches to his growth]?

God keeps the believer alive while he is worrying about staying alive.

**6:28-30: And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not work nor do they spin [weave cloth]. In fact, I say to you that even Solomon in all of his glory [the best dressed man in his day and possibly in history] did not clothe himself like one of these; in fact if God keeps clothing the common grass of the field, and He does [clothes with flowers] which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace [they shrivel up], will He not much more [πολλω μαλλον / pollo mallon] clothe you? O you, of little faith [failure to apply God's Word]!**

Again we have the use of "A fortiori" logic but this time with the equivalent Greek expression "pollo mallon" i.e. "with stronger reason". If God provides for the unimportant lilies the most beautiful of clothes (and he does) it follows with greater reason that He must (since God is rational) provide for his beloved children the necessities of life (and He does).

If God clothes the common grass of the field which grass has no relationship with him, then with greater reason God will do much more for the believer. If God can provide for grass, which suffers a lot of pressure and abuse (people walk all over it, dogs urinate on it, and the weather tears it up, dries it out, floods it etc.), can God take care of you? Of course He can; you are much more important to Him than grass!

The testimony of old age: Psalm 37:25 states, "I [David] have been young and now I am old yet I have never seen the righteous [believers] forsaken nor his seed begging for bread."

**6:31: Therefore, do not worry, thinking [The Greek word "lego" can be translated as thinking if the context warrants it], 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'**

**6:32: For the gentiles [unbelievers] strive after all of these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things.**

The Lord always provides for believers the necessities of life. The perfect example of this is the Exodus-generation. Even though they were an evil generation of believers for the most part, the Lord provided for their needs for 40 years in their wandering in the desert.

**6:33: But seek first the kingdom [eternal kingdom] and his righteousness [imputed righteousness], and all these things [the necessary provisions in life – logistical grace] will be given to you as well.**

**6:34: Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow has its own worries [Don't concern yourself with the problems which may occur tomorrow]. Each day has enough evil [trouble] of its own.**

Since God provides for our needs on a daily basis, we are to live one day at a time. God provided manna for the Jews one day at a time in the desert in order that they might learn this concept. (The Lord had commanded them to pick up only enough for one day at a time except on the day before the Sabbath.) Some Jews would not trust in the Lord for their daily provisions and so would gather more than a day's provision. To their dismay, it would become infested with maggots.

Many people spend so much time focused on the past or future that they cannot live for today. Grace gives you the capacity to live one day at a time so that you are not handicapped by the past or hindered by the future.