

The Practice of Prayer - 2

The Study

³ ...when you give to someone in need, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. ⁴ Give your gifts in private, and your Father, who sees everything, will reward you... ⁶ ...when you pray, go away by yourself, shut the door behind you, and pray to your Father in private. Then your Father, who sees everything, will reward you... ⁸ ...your Father knows exactly what you need even before you ask him!

Matthew 6:1-13 (NLT)

Matthew 6 provides great teaching from the Lord in matters of serving, prayer and placement of true treasure in this life. Upon close examination of our lives and the teachings of Jesus here we find the truth of "how to" among the "don'ts" of the lesson. We find answer lies not in the mechanics of prayer and service, but in the heart of desire once we truly belong to the Lord Jesus.

1. What do the hypocrites want in their display of giving and prayer (verses 2, 5 and 7)?
2. How will that help them?
3. What is missing in a life like theirs?
4. What does Jesus mean, "don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing"?

The overall lesson captures a sense of deep spirituality. The "Lord's Prayer" (vs. 9-13) proposes a perspective of our relationship with God rather than a grocery list of things to say or do. Jesus had informed the crowd that our Father knows exactly what we need even before we ask Him.

5. Characterize our relationship with God in verses 9-13.

"Our Father in heaven, may Your name be kept holy":

"May Your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven":

"Give us today the food we need":

"Forgive us our sins as we have forgiven those who sin against us":

"Don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one":