



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

*Special Study:* **PRAYING TO RECEIVE FROM OUR HEAVENLY FATHER**  
**Matthew 6:5-8**

Praying is one of the great privileges we have as Christians in our relationship with God. The people of God have prayed from the earliest period of the history of mankind. Abraham was called the friend of God and he prayed unto God, habitually, thereby, receiving extraordinary blessings. Moses, though he was often referred to as “the servant of God”, also maintained such relationship and fellowship with Him that “the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend” (Exodus 33:11). He, too, through this privilege of prayer, had an influence beyond that of most men in history. The name of Moses is mentioned 804 times in the Bible.

This privilege is not reserved for selected or special friends of God; it is ours, it is yours. Prayer helps us secure the power and assistance of Omnipotence so that our lives achieve more than we could have achieved ordinarily. Man becomes taller when he bends and kneels in prayer before God. Man’s noblest activity that accomplishes the highest achievement is prayer. Each man becomes greater when he is in true communion with the Almighty God.

Yet there is a wrong way, a false way, an ineffective way, of praying as well as a right way, a true way, a proper, effective way of praying. This is what the Lord, Jesus Christ, teaches us here. And who can teach us an acceptable way of praying better than Jesus? “Lord, teach us (how) to pray” (Luke 11:1).

### **EXAMPLES OF WRONG MOTIVES IN PRAYER**

Matthew 6:5,7; 23:14; Luke 18:11-14; 20:45-47; Proverbs 28:9; Psalm 66:18; Proverbs 1:24-28; Isaiah 58:1,2; 1 Kings 18:26-29; Jeremiah 10:2.

Our motives matter a lot in praying. The Pharisees prayed much but received nothing from God. Hypocrisy hindered answers to any of their prayers. “They love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men.” They were anxious and ambitious to be seen and praised for praying. Their desire was to be seen praying by others. When they prayed, they ensured that they stood in conspicuous places so that others would see them. In calling attention to themselves, their motive for praying was wrong. Whether in private praying or in public praying in the congregation, the desire to impress people with our prayer is wrong.

Neither should we use “vain repetitions, as the heathen do.” It was (and still is) the practice of the heathen to write or memorize forms of prayer and then recite the prayer many times in a day and also repeat it day after day. Such meaningless repetition lengthened their prayer but it had no power or effect. “They think that they shall be heard for their much speaking” but God pays no attention to their prayers. Wrong motives and sin make our prayers worthless and ineffective. Instead of bringing God’s help and power on our side, hypocrisy and sinful lifestyle actually set God against us (1 Peter 3:12; Ezra 8:22; 1 Samuel 12:15; Ezekiel 13:8,9). Praying is a great privilege with great potentials but wrong motives, hypocrisy and unrighteousness will render it useless and unprofitable.

### **EXHORTATION TO RIGHT MOTIVES IN PRAYER**

Matthew 6:6; Mark 1:35; Matthew 26:36-39; Acts 9:8-11; Acts 10:9,30-33; Isaiah 26:20; Daniel 9:2-4; Psalm 34:12-15; John 15:5-7; 1 John 5:14,15.

“But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and, when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.” To pray with right motives we must be cured of the carnality of the Pharisees and be free from their hypocrisy. We need to shut out all others when we pray, not seeking to be seen, known or praised by men. Freedom from pride or selfish ambition, forgetting other people, is so important to acceptable praying. This ‘principle of exclusion’ in prayer implies we exclude all people who may praise or appreciate us for praying from seeing us pray. It means that we do not advertise our praying to draw people to ourselves. Our only concern is to be in the presence of our heavenly Father who sees and enjoys our secret devotion.

Extending this principle to the whole Scripture on praying effectively will mean that we do not only shut out people, we also have to shut out things - distracting things that steal our hearts away from God. While it is important to be in the secret place of prayer, we must realize that it is more important to dwell and abide in the secret place of the most High and also abide in His Word (Psalm 91:1,15; John 15:7). Shut out people? Shut out pride, too. Shut out the society? Yes, shut out sin and Satan, too.

## **EXPECTATION OF RENEWED MIND IN PRAYER**

Matthew 6:8; Ephesians 4:23,24; 6:32; Exodus 3:7,8; Job 42:1,2; 1 John 3:20-22; Romans 8:26-28,32; Isaiah 40:28; Ephesians 3:20,21.

“Pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:6). What a great assurance of answers to our private, personal prayers we have from the lips of Christ, the Son of God. We are assured that God who sees in secret, who sees all secret things that human eyes cannot see, who sees the real, hidden, desires and burdens of the hearts, will answer our prayers. Our needs and desires are sometimes inexpressible, weightier and deeper than words can express. God who is acquainted with our real desires, will answer and grant the desires, not merely the words we speak in prayer.

What follows is both comforting and reassuring. “For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him” (Matthew 6:8). For all who are forgiven, cleansed and born again, our relationship with God is that of Father and child. God, our Father, knows our every need before we ask Him. He desires to bless us, He delights in blessing us, He is waiting to bless us with His fulness in Christ. We can always come to God in prayer, with simple confidence and child-like faith.

If you are blessed by these bible study outlines, we' d like to hear from you.  
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