

## Matthew 6:5-6

### I. "And when you pray"

- A. Jesus is talking about the regular \_\_\_\_\_ of prayer.
- B. The devout Jews prayed \_\_\_\_\_ times a day.
  - 1. Psalm 55:16-17 – But I call to God, and the LORD will save me. Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice.
  - 2. Daniel 6:10 – Daniel... went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.
  - 3. Didache 8:2-3 – "Pray thus three times a day" (The Lord's Prayer)
- C. The ninth hour (3:00) seemed to be an especially recognized time for the practice of prayer.
  - 1. Acts 3:1 – Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.
  - 2. Acts 10:30 – And Cornelius said, "Four days ago, about this hour, I was praying in my house at the ninth hour..."
- D. "In the synagogues and at the street corners" – This assumes the recognized practice of praying at \_\_\_\_\_ and sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ times throughout the day.

### II. "You must not be like the hypocrites."

- A. My disciples, Jesus says, must not be \_\_\_\_\_ playing a \_\_\_\_\_.
- B. But all too often we have \_\_\_\_\_ motives and \_\_\_\_\_ agendas.

### III. "For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, *that* they may be seen by others."

- A. Jesus is *constantly* \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts.
- B. Whenever he prays, the hypocrite first looks for an \_\_\_\_\_ (synagogues / street corners) before whom he can \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 1. Jesus never \_\_\_\_\_ the true filthiness and ugliness of our sin.
  - 2. Jesus wouldn't be warning us against being like the hypocrites if He didn't know how \_\_\_\_\_ hypocritical we all are.
  - 3. "In all virtues the entrance of ambition is to be *dreaded*, and there is no work so laudable, as not to be in many instances corrupted and polluted by it." (Calvin)

### IV. "Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward."

- ✓ Once we \_\_\_\_\_ any praise from men, we can immediately consider ourselves "\_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_."

V. "But when you pray"

- A. In spite of the abuses, Jesus expects His disciples to engage in the regular \_\_\_\_\_ of daily prayer!
- B. Religious routine and ritual is good and needful because it provides a \_\_\_\_\_ in which we can exercise true spirituality.
- C. So what \_\_\_\_\_ have we made for prayer in our religion?

VI. "Go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret."

- A. While private prayer is certainly a legitimate way to apply the text, the heart of Jesus' teaching here is that even when we pray in a public setting, we should be \_\_\_\_\_ of the people around us.
- B. "Jesus bids His disciples to turn away their eyes from the sight of men." (Calvin)
- C. What are some of the ways that we show in our prayers that we are all too conscious of the people around us?

- D. "But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret."
  - 1. When we pray, we are to be wholly \_\_\_\_\_ of our Father who is in secret.
  - 2. We can believe (*and even* \_\_\_\_\_!) that God is present if for no other reason than that Jesus has given us His own word of \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 3. Psalm 27:8 – You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, LORD, do I seek."
  - 4. One of our most basic and important tasks as disciples is to make prayer what it really is – talking \_\_\_\_\_.

E. NOTE

- 1. I think a principle that we can safely infer from Jesus' teaching is that \_\_\_\_\_ prayer should always flow from the practice of \_\_\_\_\_ prayer.
- 2. "Group prayer thrives only where prior private prayer is alive." (Bruner)

VII. "And your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

- A. Even our *secret* prayers do not \_\_\_\_\_ God's attention. But God in His infinite \_\_\_\_\_ has chosen to pay attention anyway and respond with His blessing and favor.
- B. Let's be \_\_\_\_\_ that God rewards us for praying in secret, *though we have never once in our lives earned even a moment of His* \_\_\_\_\_.