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**APOSTOLIC VERSE BY VERSE BIBLE STUDY**

**Straightway Church of Christ, Inc.**

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**WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS,**

**THERE WILL YOUR HEART BE ALSO**

**MATTHEW 6:1-25**

***Matthew 6:1-4***

***1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven."***

***2 "Therefore when thou doest [thine] alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."***

***3 "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:"***

***4 "That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.:"***

Jesus wanted his followers to be kingdom people, but he didn’t want them to do kingdom activities in order to be praised by others: Be careful not to practice your righteousness to be seen. He gives three examples of practicing righteousness: giving to the poor, praying, and fasting. These are all good, legitimate practices. But we mustn’t do them for public recognition. To do so is to be a hypocrite that is, to be a play actor, giving an external appearance of spirituality without an accompanying internal reality. Jesus was warning us that our doing must not be for a big show or to receive in return. When we help someone, it should not be for public acclamation. We should help, because there is a need, and not to benefit ourselves. See a need and quietly take care of it. Don't run and put it the paper when you feed someone. God sees everything we do, but more than that, He sees the reason why we did it. In the old western movies, they would create a town that appeared to be full of buildings. But each structure was a façade. A building might look like a saloon from the front, but there was nothing on the other side of its door. Such a movie set gave a false impression. When you give money to those in need (whether directly or through your church or another ministry), don’t sound a trumpet and don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. In other words, don’t brag about your giving to let others know how generous you are. Those who announce their giving have their reward and receive nothing from God. So, if you’re playing for the applause of people, you have all you’re going to get. But give in secret, and then your Father will reward you.

***Matthew 6:5-6***

***5 "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites [are]: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."***

***6 "But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly."***

Likewise, when you pray, don’t do it for the applause of people. This Scripture does not mean don’t pray in church. It just means don't pray, just so men can say, what a beautiful prayer you prayed. The hypocritical religious leaders would pray in public to be seen. Sometimes you’re going to be called upon to pray in public. But, if you do it to put on a show, that’s a problem. Do you pray in public while God never hears from you in private? Go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father. The most effective prayers are when we seek God by ourselves, having nothing to gain but fellowship with Him. Everyone should have a place to go and pray to God alone. Prayer is just talking to God. The words we say are unimportant. God knows the desires of our hearts before we say a word. He just loves for us to come to Him to visit, with no ulterior motives. When we pray, we must be quite part of the time and let God speak to our spirit. God does not want us to ever be ashamed to pray. Just talk to God. He will listen and answer your prayer. Be sincere.

***Matthew 6:7 "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen [do]: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking."***

***Matthew 6:8 "Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him."***

In these verses above, Jesus was saying, talk to God, don't memorize a prayer and say it every time. And don’t babble like the Gentiles, using meaningless repetition and uttering chants, thinking that God hears you because of your many words. Tell God what is in your heart. Tell Him you love Him and need His help. Probably, the most famous prayer in all the world is the prayer Jesus taught them to pray here. Most people misunderstand what he was saying. We all memorize this prayer and say it without having the vaguest idea what it meant.

***Matthew 6:9 "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name."***

Let's stop and see what Jesus was trying to tell us. First, recognize God for who He is (our Father). Worship Him before going on. Speak to Him with reverence. If you will notice in verse 9, Jesus said "After this manner therefore pray ye." He did not say, pray this prayer. He was showing the disciples, and us as well, the way to get results from our prayers. When Jesus said, “whenever/ when you pray”, he knew that disciples prayed. What is prayer? You don’t need to attend seminary to understand it. Put simply, prayer is talking with God; it’s communication with him. The religious leaders sounded fancy when they prayed, but they did it to impress others. You don’t have to use fancy theological words. How, then, should a disciple pray? Jesus showed them: You should pray like this. He wasn’t giving them a prayer to repeat but guidelines to provide prayer categories a prayer template, if you will. Opening with our Father in heaven reminds us that when Christians pray, they’re addressing their Daddy, their heavenly Father. Some people have had bad fathers and say they can’t relate to God as Father, but we are not to measure our heavenly Father by the standard of our earthly ones. Rather, we are to measure our earthly fathers by the standard of our heavenly Father who is perfect. He is the ultimate definition of what a father is. Notice also that he is our Father (so you’re not the only kid in the family), and he is in heaven (a reminder that heaven overrules earth). What should we ask of our heavenly Father? First, we must pray that his name would be honored as holy. When Scripture talks about God’s “name,” it’s referring to who he is, his character. To honor him as “holy” is to treat him as unique in a class by himself. He is the Creator of all and the only one deserving of worship.

***Matthew 6:10 "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as [it is] in heaven."***

In the phrase your kingdom come, Jesus calls his disciples to make a pledge of allegiance to the kingdom of God—to God’s rule over his creation. But, if you want to know his kingdom purpose for your life, you must be committed to his kingdom agenda. God is not just Supreme Ruler of heaven, but of this earth, as well. We must say as Jesus said, "not my will but thine". We should be looking forward to God's kingdom being set up on this earth. When the U.S. Olympic athletes are awarded gold medals, they don’t get to choose the songs they hear at the accompanying ceremony. They are representatives of our nation, so the song played is the national anthem of the U.S. Similarly, you are called to march to God’s tune. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven suggests that if we’re following God’s agenda, we’ll want his heavenly will to be done in our earthly history. So, what is God’s “will”? God’s will is what God wants when, where, and how he wants it. Those who are part of God’s family are to follow God’s rules. He’s sovereign, and he’ll accomplish his purposes with you or without you. The question is, Will you get to take part in it? Remember, he’s not limited to our obedience.

***Matthew 6:11 "Give us this day our daily bread."***

God will take care of our needs one day at a time. The Bible said take no thought for tomorrow. Live each day one day at a time. Once we align ourselves to God’s program, that’s where our requests come in. Give us today our daily bread. First, you ask God to meet your daily needs so you can fulfill his plan. God doesn’t establish a program that he doesn’t fund. Nevertheless, our requests for his provision are to be “daily.” This is a reminder that you are dependent on him all day, every day. Just as the Israelites relied on God to provide manna regularly in the wilderness, so you are to live your life in dependence on God—one day at a time.

***Matthew 6:12 "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."***

We all want the first part of verse 12, but few want the last. We must forgive to get forgiveness. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors relates to sins. When God forgives, he no longer credits sin to your account. And as we have been forgiven by God, so we are to forgive the sins others commit against us. Some people have been seriously sinned against. They have endured horrific cruelty. Nevertheless, the Bible teaches that anything that comes a believer’s way the good, the bad, and the ugly has to come through God’s fingers. God is sovereign, and he permits things for the good of his children even when we don’t understand. Just as in the story of Joseph, human beings may intend to do evil against us, but God intends even that for good.

***Matthew 6:13 "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."***

Our lusts cause us to be tempted. We should ask each day to let the blood of Jesus wash over our minds and our beings so the devil cannot attack us in these areas. God will deliver us from evil, but we must realize our need for His help and use it. Just as the prayer begins with praise and recognition of God for what He is, it ends with praise and recognition. "Amen" means so be it. Do not bring us into temptation requires that we face facts. Satan is smarter than us and has centuries of experience ruining human lives. So ask God to keep you from getting into situations that detour you from the kingdom road. Pray that he would deliver you from temptations that you’re not ready to handle.

***Matthew 6:14 "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:"***

***Matthew 6:15 "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."***

All through the Bible we see statements like the one above. "Judge not, that ye not be judged" Etc. Though Jesus emphasized forgiveness in the Lord’s Prayer, he returns to it here. Don’t miss that God’s forgiveness is conditioned on your forgiveness of others. Jesus isn’t talking about salvation here, though, but about our fellowship with God after we’re saved, as a part of our discipleship. To forgive is to hold a grudge no longer, not to seek retribution. Since we all need God’s forgiveness regularly, we must not withhold it from others. If we do, we’ll lose out on fellowship with God.

***Matthew 6:16 "Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."***

***Matthew 6:17 "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;"***

***Matthew 6:18 "That thou appear not unto men to***

***fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."***

As with giving and praying, Jesus exhorted his followers not to fast for public recognition. The fact that he says, whenever you fast, tells us he considers fasting a legitimate spiritual discipline. To fast is to temporarily give up a bodily craving, typically food, because of a spiritual need. Instead of eating, then, you devote yourself to prayer in secret, seeking God’s kingdom intervention. But, if your goal in avoiding food is for other people to celebrate how spiritual you look, then their approval will be your reward. Fasting involves more than giving up food for a day or two. A fast is a solemn time of separation from worldly things of all kinds. For a fast to be effective, it must be a fast that God encouraged you to do for some specific prayer request to be answered. The time that would ordinarily be watching tv or fixing lunch, or 1,000 other little things, should be spent studying your Bible and praying. During a fast, God is your source. Many types of illness require fasting. When the disciples came to Jesus and asked why they could not heal someone, Jesus said, this type comes out by prayer and fasting. When you fast, it is a serious time with God and Him alone. We fast to show sincerity. God will honor a fast, if we are sincerely seeking. You may fast one meal, one day, two days, three days, or as long as you have agreed with God you will fast. It is better to promise less. You must follow through, until God releases you. God does not like to play games. Some people drink juice during a fast, but a true fast is a total abstinence. Pray before you begin. Sometimes a preacher will call a fast for a church, but usually it is an individual thing. Don't brag to others about a fast. Just separate yourself for a season, pray and fast. It gets wonderful results.

***Matthew 6:19 "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:"***

***Matthew 6:20 "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:"***

***Matthew 6:21 "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."***

In these verses, Jesus emphasizes the spiritual over the physical. Everyone collects treasures on earth. But they don’t last. Heavenly treasures are a far better investment. They’re eternal and imperishable. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Store your treasure where you want your heart to be. Your heart will follow your treasure. In order to focus on heaven and store treasure there, you have to see clearly. We have seen in recent weeks the stock market dropping drastically and many people lost their life's savings. Some cannot cope with the loss of worldly goods and have resorted to suicide. The sad thing is that you cannot end it all. We are eternal beings and will spend an eternity somewhere. When we end our lives, there is some question where that eternity will be. Really, God does not care if you are poor or rich. God does not want us to put money ahead of Him, or His people. The sin of having money occurs, when we see someone in need, and will not help them. Love of money is a sin. Whenever you help God's people here on earth, you are laying up treasures for heaven.

***Matthew 25:40 “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."***

This is what God would have you to do if He has endowed you with wealth. Be quick to distribute to those in need. Be content with what you have, whether it be much, or little. Help everyone you can, as often as you can. In heaven there are no thieves. Your heart and pocketbook are usually in the same place. Put God first, and all other things will fall in place.

**QUESTIONS**

1. When you do alms, you can lose your reward if you do what?
2. What do the hypocrites do?
3. If you do alms in secret, what will God do?
4. For what reason should we help someone?
5. When we pray, where should we pray?
6. The most effective prayers are what?
7. What is prayer?
8. What is the most famous prayer?
9. What is the first thing we should do in prayer?
10. God is supreme ruler of where?
11. How does God take care of our needs?
12. How can we be forgiven?
13. What causes us to be tempted?
14. How should prayer end?
15. Who is spoken of as having a sad countenance when fasting?
16. What two things should we do, so as not to appear to be fasting?
17. What must we do for God to honor our fast?
18. What can happen to treasures on earth?
19. Where should we lay up treasures?
20. What must a rich person be quick to do?