

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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Continuing our study of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, 6 and 7. We're in Chapter 6, where Jesus is now dealing with what we would call hypocrisy, where you say one thing and live out another. He's been dealing with us in several areas of our life. The first area we talked about was giving, and that was in Chapter 6, verses 2-4.

Now we want to move into the second area where he talks about hypocrisy, not to show yourself off for public display, but do you really want to hallow the name of God, and that is through prayer. We're now going to move into what we call the Disciple's Prayer, known as the Lord's Prayer, which we will see in Chapter 6, verses 5-15.

Before I move into that, gentlemen, I just want to cover back something on our previous lesson to summarize and give you some insights on giving. We talked about giving. Do we give with the right attitude? The issue here is what your motive is. Who do you really want to please? Are you giving to please someone else, or are you giving to please, to build your reputation? Are you doing this because the Holy Spirit has moved in your life just to do something for the kingdom, and you don't need to let your left hand know what the right hand is doing? That doesn't mean that you don't give and be recognized. That's not what we're talking about. We're talking about the hypocrisy of doing it to think that what you're doing has merit, to improve on the person and work of Christ. Remember, justification by faith alone is that God gives you credit for the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ.

How can you add to perfection? You can't. Whenever you and I have a motive that says...let me explain it this way. We need to understand three different words—antinomianism, legalism and grace. How they all fit together? Antinomianism, which means against the law. You basically you say that what I do doesn't make any difference. I can do whatever I want because what I do doesn't make any difference. That's antinomianism. Against the law. You're basically saying that the law has no control over me anymore in the sense of I'm not bound by it. What we mean in that, you're not under law, means you're not bound to earn your salvation through the keeping of the law. That is through grace. Antinomianism basically says this—what I do doesn't make any difference; I can do what I want. That's antinomianism.

Legalism says what I do makes a difference. Antinomianism says what I do doesn't make any difference. Legalism says what I do makes a difference. Essentially, you're saying that what I'm doing now is adding merit to the person and work of Christ. That's legalism. Because you don't understand the fact that through justification by faith, how do you improve upon perfection? You can't do that. Jesus is the only one who lived a sinlessly perfect and perfectly obedient life, and through justification, you get credit for that. Whatever you and I do doesn't add anything to that. That's legalism; thinking that what I do makes a difference.

Grace says this—what I did for you makes the difference. That's grace. What I did for you makes the difference.

In our giving, you see, what I'm saying is don't let the left hand know what your right hand is doing. What that means is you can't add anything on to your justification. You give out of a love response to God, not to do something to call attention to yourself. That's where Jesus is talking about the motive behind your giving. I can't describe or tell you what your motive is. You have to examine that yourself. That's the whole context of what we've read so far in Matthew 6.

Let me give you a couple of summary statements about giving that might be helpful to us. You will find

this on your notes on the previous handout. If you go to 1 Corinthians 16, let me read the first couple of verses. This will give us a good summary of our giving motive. 1 Corinthians 16, Paul's letter to the church at Corinth. He talks about the collection of the saints. Here we can see some insight upon the proper motive and methodology and manner of our giving. Paul writes this, "Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. ²On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come. ³And when I arrive, I will send those whom you accredit by letter to carry your gift to Jerusalem. ⁴If it seems advisable that I should go also, they will accompany me."

Those first two verses are the ones that I want to call your attention to. You see four principles of giving that might help us with our motives. First of all, we see that it's personal. Giving is personal. It's something that you do [UNCLEAR] of your relationship to the Lord. It's between you and him. It's not between you and your church, it's not between you and your society, it's not between you and the culture, it's not between you and your reputation. It's between you and the Lord. It is to be personal giving. That means somebody can't dictate or manipulate you or prescribe you to give a certain amount. It's personal.

The second thing we see there is it's periodic. He said, "On the first day of every week." (1 Corinthians 16:2) This is something that becomes habitual. It's periodic. You do it whenever the Lord leads you, but you do it with a planned mentality.

The third thing is it's planned. You first of all see that it's personal, it's periodic and it's planned. He said, "On the first day of every week, lay aside something as you prosper." What that means is you can only determine what that is. It to be very personal giving, it is to be very periodic, it needs to be repetitious, and it means it's something that you plan to do. You plan to give. You just don't respond to the latest activity, the latest pledge request that somebody gives you. This is something in your own relationship you're planning to do.

Lastly, it is premeditated. In other words, it's something that you purpose to do in your heart as an expression of grace in response and a love obedience to the Lord. It's periodic, it's personal, it's planned and it's premeditated. It means you've thought about it. You've prayed about it. You've given some consideration. How does it fit into my other responsibilities? What do I need to do? What should I not do here? Am I under the pressure of somebody manipulating me to give because of the latest cause? You see, those are things that happen in our society. But I think there's great counsel here in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 about how we should give. You'll see that in your notes on the previous handout.

The next thing I would like to cover in this giving section...often times, we are subjected to a lot of pressure to give to various organizations, and rightfully so. The question is to whom should you give? Now I can't answer that for you. You go back to 1 Corinthians and you'll see that it's personal. That's a choice you have to make. It's planned, it's periodic, it's premeditated. The same thing applies when all these fundraising events come down the pike. Which one should you give to? Let me give you some insights that just might be helpful. Again, this is not a legalistic thing. We're not adding any merit to what we do, but what it is, it might just be helpful for us to understand, to help us gain some discernment as to whom we should give to.

Remember, in the church, there's a lot of ravaging wolves disguised in sheep's clothing. There's a lot of things that look "Christian." But are they? Are they really? Or do they just look they're good social Gospel things? The church is always in the front of social Gospel, certainly, but that is not the role of the church. The role of the church is not to be preaching a social Gospel and taking care of the needs of people. Yes, we're always in the forefront of doing that. That is not the mission of the church. The mission of the church is to proclaim the Gospel of Christ, the person and work of Christ. That's the

mission of the church.

We're also involved in the other things. If you'll notice in Acts 6, when the disruption came because the Greek speaking widows were saying that we're not being treated as well as the Jewish speaking widows. What did the elders do? Did they drop everything and say, "Let's go meet the needs"? No. They said, "We're going to give ourselves to the labor of word and doctrine. You guys take care of that." There you begin to see, yes, we're in the forefront of always taking care of the needs, but the real church mission is not taking care of the needs of people. It's proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. That's when they set aside the deacons. They set aside the deacons to do that.

We have to have some discernment.

Audience Member: Sorry Bruce, I just, totally lost of social Gospel.

What I mean is the survival things—food, clothing, shelter; those things that deal with the people. That's what I mean by the social Gospel. A lot of times, we think the church's responsibility is to be involved in social activities of our community and of our society, and that would be food, clothing, shelter, all the other issues. Now yes, we are. Now I'm saying this cautiously, but I'm saying that is not the mission of the church. The mission of the church is to proclaim the Gospel of Christ. As a result of that, people who are moved by the Gospel of Christ will be involved in the social Gospel. It is not the role of the church to be the harbinger of the social Gospel mentality. It's a consequence of the Gospel of Christ changing people's lives. That's what I mean.

Audience Member: Thank you.

Here are some insights that might be helpful as to who we should give go. Again, I can't tell you who to give to. I just want to try to give you some insights that you can pray about and ask the Lord through the Holy Spirit to give you the discernment to know. First of all, here are some principles of when you're looking at an organization, things I think we should consider. This is what I use in my own life.

First of all, is their message true to the Scripture? Is their message true to the Scripture? Is it good or does it just look good? Is it good or does it look good? (1 Thessalonians 1:6-8) The first thing we have to look at is the message of what they're communicating true to the Gospel of Christ? Is it a biblical gospel, not a socialized one?

The second thing I think is important is are people responding to the message? What is the response of the people to this ministry organization, and are they responding to the message? (1 Thessalonians 2:13-14). The third principle of understanding and discerning to whom we should give, prerequisites for giving, would be this. Are the leaders' lives an example of their message? Are the leaders' lives an example of the message? (1 Thessalonians 2:10-12) You've got to take a look at the leadership. Is the leadership giving an example of what they're saying? In other words, is their life matching their words? That's critical for us to do before we give to organizations. Sometimes we are enablers rather than edifiers. Sometimes we enable things that may not be consistent with the kingdom of God operation. I can't tell you what they are. You have to discern that yourself. All I'm saying is we need to be wise and discerning in where we give our funds.

Number four is there freedom from waste and debt? Is there freedom from waste and debt? (1 Thessalonians 3:10-12, 4:11-12, 5:22, Romans 13:2) Is the organization in debt? It's very, very critical that we take a look at the ministries that we're supporting and the organizations who are asking us to support them in their activities. Are they free from debt and free from waste? In other words, one of the things that I do...now, in my role at PNC, I manage a group called Private Foundation Management

Services. I help individual wealthy families give their money away to organizations. That's what I do. I serve as the Executive Director of 28 family foundations throughout the United States. Most of my job is screening these organizations who come to this family and want a grant. My role is to screen all of these applications, consistent with the mission statement of that family's intended foundation. One of those would be, a classic example is the mission is K-12 Native American children of reservations. I'm involved with all 363 Indian Reservations who call me on the phone looking for money for a cause on their Indian reservation. I have to screen that through the mission of this foundation to see if it's a good marriage between their need and our ability to give.

One of the things that I always ask, when I have designed an application for these organizations to submit a grant request, I ask them this question; they have to send this information on their financial statement. What is your administrative costs? In other words, you're asking me for a dollar. How much of that is going to go to direct service versus how much goes to administration? That would include salaries, fundraising and activities and all that other stuff. You'd be surprised at the percentage. Just give me a percent of your administrative costs. In my mind, anything over 20% is a bit high. The national average would say 25%. I back it down to about 20%; anything over 20%. In other words, if you're going to ask me to give you a dollar, you're going to tell me 20 cents of that is going to go to raise money? You see, you have to be very, very discerning to see are they free of waste. I get some that come in and say 60%—60% goes to salary, administrative costs, advertising, all the other stuff they do, and the deliver 40% of their funds go to direct services.

There's no magical number here. All I'm looking for is a trend because I'm trying to apply this in my professional life just as much as I do in my spiritual life. Are they free from debt and are they free from waste? Why would you want to give to an organization that's in debt all the time? All you're doing is enabling them to exist. Maybe the Lord doesn't need them around. Maybe it's bad management. Those are issues you have to take a look at.

When I was the Vice President of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes in Kansas City back in the late 70's, one of my responsibilities was to manage their summer conference program. My commitment was we'll never be in debt. Romans 13:2 says, "Owe no man nothing but love." So my conviction was I will manage this ministry; we'll never be in debt. During the gas crisis of the 1970's, I had to cancel two conferences. I got reamed. I got hung in effigy, because I cancelled two programs and people said this, "Well maybe...your cancelled program, that person may not come to Christ. You may have been the one who just prevented them from coming to salvation because you cancelled that program."

First of all, that says you do not understand the sovereignty of God let alone money management. You see, if it depends upon me, then nobody's ever going to be saved. Out of conviction, I would just never let us go into debt; just never let us do that, because I didn't want us to be giving a perception of we're in debt or that we're wasting our money, we're not managing it well. One of the things you have to take a look with these organizations is are they free from debt and are they wasting their funds?

The last that I would offer for your consideration would be this. Do they beg or make needs known? Do they beg or make needs known? (1 Thessalonians 2:9, 3:10-13) There's a difference between letting your needs be known, as Paul did, as opposed to begging. You ought to see some of the stuff that I've gotten over the years. "If you don't do this, God will do that. If you don't do this, people won't come to faith." In other words, they're basically saying, "It all depends upon you and your gift." Are they begging?

I got one from a summer conference program. This was a Christian ministry. They said, "Last year, with the gifts that we gave, it cost us \$21.51 for every conversion. For \$21.51, you can convert somebody to Christ. Last year, we had 400 kids come to conference and 500 accepted Christ." That's what they said.

Four hundred came and 500 accepted? Now I'm not sure if that's a typo or if it's just ignorance. But they said this—for \$21, I get to save somebody. Now what is that? That's nothing but begging and manipulation. You see, you have to be discerning. I can't tell you where to give, brothers. All I can say is I think the Scripture says you've got to be wise. You've got to be discerning. The gifts that God gives you are for his kingdom. As kingdom citizens, how do we use that? We use it wisely. So be discerning.

That's what Jesus is saying in Matthew 6 about hypocrisy about our giving. Why do you give? Do you give to be given accolades? To build up your reputation? Or do you do it privately? Do you do it personally? Do you do it periodically? Do you do it planned? And do you do it premeditated? You see, those are the advices that Scripture would give us and the counsel the Scripture would give us about our not being hypocrites in our giving patterns.

***Audience Member:** [UNCLEAR]...are there organizations that you've seen [UNCLEAR] give us an example of, is there some way to understanding [UNCLEAR]...*

I'd prefer not to do that. I think I don't have the right to speak publicly about organizations and either degrade them or upgrade them one way or the other. I think I just have the leave that to you. I mean, I'll talk to you privately, but that's not something I would like to do publicly. I don't think...I have not been given their permission to do that, and therefore, I would be nothing but gossiping if I did that. Thank you for understanding.

***Bob:** I just wanted to comment on this business of administrative costs and [UNCLEAR]. We have an example right here in Pittsburgh, Brother's Brother Foundation does a great job of managing their administrative costs in relationship to what they provide.*

There are several resources one can gather to look at the administrative costs and see how they're rated. That's certainly a very good example. Brother's Brother would be a very good one. There are all sorts of ways we can do that.

***Audience Member:** Bruce, do you feel that the church should be running on a 20% administrative cost?*

I can't say that about the church, because I don't know what the ministry the Lord's given them. I don't know that, so I can't say 20% on every church. I can't say that. I don't know what the Holy Spirit's leading that church to do. All I can say is that I think a church should operate and not be in debt.

Again, if it might give you an illustration, the two times that I had the privilege of serving as senior pastor—in a church in Kansas as well as in Chicago—we never were in debt. That was my commitment. When I came to the second church, one of my commitments to the elders was this, “We will not be in debt or I'm not your guy. You've got to understand that coming in. We will never be in debt.” And we never were. Here's what happened. We had a membership of about 300. There was an automobile factory about 75 miles from our church where a lot of our members, about 1/3 of our members, worked in that plant. Out of 300, we had about 100 people who worked there, including their children and their families.

There were a lot of layoffs. It was our commitment, because of the things we taught about giving...do you know what happened when we had 1/3 of our church was unemployed? Our giving went up. Because we realized this—it's our responsibility to help those families. It's not the government. It's not the state of Illinois. It's our responsibility, because they're part of the family of God. Our giving went up. You know, of those 100 families, in the 18 months that they were unemployed, none of them ever missed a mortgage, none of them ever missed a payment, because it was our responsibility to help them. We were not giving handouts. We just took care of them and we organized a system where our giving

went up that we could take care of our family.

Do you know what happened when those people got employed? Guess who became the biggest givers? Those people who were unemployed, who we took care of through the body of Christ, our giving never went back to its original state. Let's just say prior to the unemployment, it was X, then it went up to Y for about two years. When all those people found jobs, it went up to Z. It never went back to X. You see, that's the power of the Holy Spirit when you just become responsible in your managing of your money. We're going to talk about that in Matthew 6 later on, when we talk about how do you manage your money. If you're really serious about being involved in the kingdom of God, Luke's going to tell us how you manage your money is the best barometer for God to understand how faithful you can be. If you can't be faithful in the little things, how are you going to be faithful in the big things? The big things are the kingdom of God operations, not your wealth. We'll get into that when we talk about meaningful money management.

***Sig:** I guess you wouldn't be a proponent of many ministries that I see coming through my mail where they say it's getting close to the year end and we're \$250,000 behind and we really need your support to balance the books by the end of the year. I know, I'm always surprised by that because it's like begging or it's like we're in debt. Would you look at that and say, well that's not a...I'd rather hear them tell me the good things they're doing, the people they're reaching or the impact they're making rather than saying we're just behind in money and need your help.*

Well, personally, I'd view that as a caution. I would go back and apply the principles we've just learned from the Scripture to apply that. We have to realize this. Hudson Taylor, who was a missionary to China, makes a wonderful statement. He said, "God's work done God's way will not lack God's support." When you don't get enough funds coming into your ministry, it's not a fundraising problem; it's a ministerial direction problem. In other words, you may need to change what you're doing because God's work done God's way will not lack God's support.

There were times when I was in the ministry at the Fellowship of Christian Athletes where we didn't have the money coming in. My first question was not how do we raise money. My question was, "Lord, what are you teaching us about the ministry?" One of the big things we changed, we stopped working with kids and started working with coaches. We realized this—for every one child I could influence through the FCA ministry, I could influence 25 through a coach. So we started emphasizing a ministry to coaches rather than a ministry to kids. You know what happened? Ministry took off. This was not a fundraising issue; it was a direction of the ministry issue. God's work done God's way will not lack God's support. If you're lacking funds, the first thing you have to say is, "Lord, what do we need to do differently? Ministerially, not fundraising wise."

***Carl:** Bruce, I want to add onto that because so many times, I think churches get mixed up on their mission. What we have to recognize is that if God gives the church a mission, he's going to provide the provision.*

That's right.

***Carl:** God is not slack with his resources. What we have to do is trust in him, depend on him. He will always supply. If he said he would supply all our needs according to his riches in glory, he's got to do that. But your mission's got to line up with what his will is.*

Amen. That's right. That's what I'm saying. It's a matter of the direction of your ministry. In my mind, based upon what we've talked about here today, and my life's experience based upon adhering to these Scripture principles, would be this. Lack of funds is God's quality control measure. Lack of funds is

God's quality control measure. If you don't have the funds, it's a quality control issue. What do we need to do differently? Not who do I hire to go raise money. But what do we need to do differently to fulfill the mission that he's given us? Maybe we've got a convoluted mission from what he intended us to do in the first place. Look at lack of funds as a quality control issue, not as a means to go out and manipulate and beg for money.

Bill: *Evangelicals won't give to an organization unless they see testimonies, numbers, of people [UNCLEAR] saved [UNCLEAR].*

I can't be their Holy Spirit. You'd have to ask them why they do it. I don't know. All I can say is that when I teach the principles of financial management, I think you go back to the Scriptures and teach people how to be discerning. Some people are not, because we have a tendency, as Matthew 6 is teaching us about hypocrisy, to do things for the recognition. So organizations will say, "For so much money, you can get a conversion," or whatever it may be. I think we just have to be careful of that. But I can't be somebody's Holy Spirit. I have enough problems trying to figure out who I need to give to, let alone anybody else.

Audience Member: *[UNCLEAR] quote Jeremiah Burrows, who was a great Puritan preacher, "When money becomes important, numbers become important. When numbers become important, the Gospel gets watered down."*

Yeah, that's it. You see, here again, go back to this overriding summary statement. Lack of funds is God's quality control measure. Carl is exactly right. If you're adhering to the mission that God has given you, who's the one that's responsible to provide for you? God does. We just need to make sure that we're in line with the mission that he's given us. That's where the church runs into problems. We're off trying to do all sorts of social things, which is nice. Yes, we need to be involved. That's a result of our conversion; that's not our mission in life. Our mission of the church life is this. It's to proclaim the Gospel of Christ, the sinless perfection and perfect obedience of Christ. As a result of that, the Holy Spirit converts people, regenerates them, and as a result of that, he moves in their life to get involved in social things. It is not the role of the church to be involved in social things, per se, as a mission calling. You understand the difference?

Understand what I'm not saying. I'm not saying we don't take care of the poor and the needy. I'm saying yes, we do. It's a consequence; it's not the goal. It's a consequence. It's a result of our regeneration; it's not the purpose of the church. It's one of the functions that the church may be involved in, but it's not the calling of the church. We just need to make sure in our giving, are we perpetuating, are we enabling, or are we encouraging ministries that are true to the kingdom?

Let me give you those four principles again, just quickly. Is the message true to Scripture? Are people responding to the message? Are the leaders' lives an example of the message? Is there freedom from waste and debt? Do they beg or make their needs or known? There's nothing wrong with making your needs known.

Audience Member: *Bruce, are seminaries teaching that today, these particular concepts you're talking about?*

To the best of my ability, I would say not very much. I don't know that. I can't speak for all seminaries. But I think when I see the product coming out of seminaries, it gives you some indication of what they're being taught in the seminary. I think often times, unfortunately, many of our seminaries are teaching more administration than they are messaging. They don't teach you how to preach. They don't teach you what to preach. They teach you how to administer and be a manager, rather than being a

messenger. You see, you go to seminary to learn how to communicate the Gospel. You don't go there to learn how to become an administrator. You see, there are gifts to the church. One of those gifts is administration. You don't need to go to seminary to become an administrator. God makes you an administrator. You're right there in the church; you can do that. Let the pastor preach and do what he's called to do, to be the pastor/teacher. I don't think seminaries teach that.

That's why I wanted to study the great Puritan preachers when I did my doctoral work, because I wanted to study how they went about it and what they thought about the ministry of the church.

Don: The Charity Navigators, an online resource, is that...do you have any experience with that?

That helps you evaluate...Charity Navigator will help you evaluate the authenticity of various non-profit organizations. That's worth looking at. That's a resource you could go. Another thing you can do is you can go on GuideStar.org. It will have listed the 990 of all these organizations, their income tax returns. You can go scroll down and see their income. That's public knowledge. You then begin to see where they're spending their money, their salaries, how much goes to administration, how much goes to ministry, and so forth. There are several sources you can that. It would be helpful in our being more discerning in our giving patterns.

Audience Member: Could you provide a little bit more insight into when you're giving, whether you do it anonymously or let your name be known. I worry about motive there a little bit, and sometimes you come across a situation where maybe you want the organizations to know that you're supporting them.

Correct.

Audience Member: But you don't want motives to get in the way.

Okay, now that's a legitimate, excellent question, and I can't answer it {LAUGHTER}, because that's between you and the Lord, not between you and me or you and the organization. Now, there may be times when it is prudent. I give to one ministry, and it's very helpful to them when they see my name as a support of that organization because it may help somebody else say, "Well if he's doing it, maybe I could." I look at that...now I had to deal with myself and say now what's my motive. I sat down with them and I said, "I need you to understand the only reason I'm letting you do this is because if it may be helpful to you, then I can live with that." The year before I had done it without having my name on there, so they came to me and said, so I just talked to them... Individually, you have to look at that. There's nothing wrong with that. You have to look at yourself and say is the motive I'm doing that for something more than it is my being self-directed, acclamation and reputation. That's what you have to deal with between you and the Lord, but it's certainly permissible to do that. On some occasions, it would be the prudent thing to do.

Anything else? We'll get more into meaningful money management as we work our way through Chapter 6 of the Sermon on the Mount. Now we want to go into the next issue that Jesus talks about in Matthew 6 about being hypocrites, and that's how we pray. How do we pray?

Let's go to Matthew 6 again. Don, thank you for playing the Disciple's Prayer for us to meditate on. Let's take a look at the beginning, at verse 5, of Matthew 6, "⁵And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁷And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need

before you ask him. ⁹Pray then like this..." Now then we go into the Disciple's Prayer.

Just a couple things of introduction there we need to understand. Notice, first of all, that he says, "When you pray." He's not saying, "This is how you pray," he's saying, "When you pray." The obvious implication is what? That's you're doing a lot of praying. That's what the implication is, that you're doing a lot of praying. When you do that, this is something that's habitual. We need to understand, first of all, that he doesn't say, "If you pray," or "This is how you should pray," he's saying, "When you pray." He's dealing with the whole issue of don't be like the hypocrites because when they do it, they do it to show off.

Did you ever notice the number of times that when you're in a prayer session how one person sort of dominates? Just long and long, and they use all the right theological terms and how long it is. I've been in some prayer sessions where, you know, you just kind of want to go... Now, not being critical and judgmental, but all I'm saying is that's an example that he's saying is don't heap up unnecessary words. You notice in the Scripture the number of prayer that we have, the prayers of Paul are very short, when you study the prayers of Paul? They're extremely short; they're not long in duration. We'll talk about that as we move into this.

One of the things we need to really understand, first of all, is that when we talk about the Lord's Prayer, we're talking about several things that he gives us, and admonitions about what we are to do. He's telling us how to pray, not what to pray. Let's take a look at some things just overall before we work our way into this word by word.

Notice, there are several elements of the Lord's Prayer. The first element would contain three major themes—hallowed by thy name, thy kingdom come and thy will be done. That's the first element. That's our spiritual needs. The second element would be our physical needs, "Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts...and lead us not into temptation." That deals with our earthly life. The first three deal with our spiritual life, the second deal with our earthly life. All of that is certainly spiritual. Now these first three—the first elements of hallowed by thy name, thy kingdom come and thy will be done—all deal with God in his glory.

First of all, that gives an insight about what true prayer really is. True prayer really is for God and his glory, not necessarily me and my needs. Now we're going to work through this because there's balance. But you notice when he says, "When you pray, this is how you should pray," he's teaching us not only the matter of prayer, he's teaching us the means of prayer, but the things that we ought to be praying about and the manner of how we do it.

The second three elements—give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts and lead us not into temptation—deal with man and our needs. So you see, there's perfect balance. Again, the first elements deal with the purpose of prayer, which is hallowing God's name, his kingdom coming and his will being done. That's the purpose of our prayer. The second three elements show the means of our prayer; in other words, give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts and lead us not into temptation. It's the way in which God will do that.

Then again, in summary, the first three elements show that, first of all, God is a father, then he's a king, then he's a master. You'll notice as you take a look at these—hallowed be they name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done—first of all, you see that he's a father, then he's a king, and then he's a master. The second three elements that as a father, he gives us bread; as a king, he forgives us our sins; and as a master, he pardons us of our sins; and he leads us not into temptation. You see, these three elements of God's will in our life as a father, he gives us bread; as a king, he forgives our debts and pardons us; and as a master, he leads us not into temptation.

In summary, from that, we can devise this; that the model prayer, the Disciple's Prayer, seeks, first of all, to glorify God, to lift up his name, and to exalt his holiness. Prayer is to focus on God, not on me. John 14:13 says this, "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." We always emphasize this first part, "whatever you ask in Jesus' name, I'm going to get." That's what we always emphasize. The real emphasis of that verse is the latter part, "so that the Father may be glorified in the Son." Why is it that God answers prayer? It's because he will glorify the Son in request of your prayer.

It's something like this, if you give me a little bit of leeway here. When you and I pray, the Son goes to the Father and says, "Father, he's one of ours. He's one for which I paid the eternal cost of his sin in his life. He's redeemed. He's justified by faith. He's wrapped in the robes of righteousness. Father, he's one of ours. Would you honor yourself and honor me by answering his request." The Father looks at the Son and says this, "Son, I'm going to answer that request because you asked me for it." You see, that's what it means, the intercessory work of Christ, which we'll talk about in Romans 8.

See, Romans 8 starts off with, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." We're no longer under the law in earning our salvation. We're no longer condemned. At the end of Chapter 8 it says nothing can separate you from the love of Christ. You see, Chapter 8 begins with no condemnation; it ends with no separation, nothing can separate you from the love of Christ because you're not under condemnation anymore. In verse 33, it says...and the reason that happens is because of Christ's intercession. No separation, no condemnation because for Christ's intercession. John 14 is a critical understanding of our prayer. Again, let me read this, "Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son." You see, that's the motive of all of our prayer—so that the Father will be glorified in the Son by answering the request.

In every request that you and I ever make, God answers it in one of two ways. Either protects us or provides it. He'll protect you by not answering it and giving it to you, because he knows that you don't need that. If you pray for something and you don't get it, guess what that means? You don't need it. So what is your response? Oh rats! {LAUGHTER} No, our response is thank you. I just cleaned that up for you. {LAUGHTER} You see, our response is, "Lord, thank you. You're my Father. You know what I need. You are protecting me from myself by not answering that prayer because my prayer was not consistent with who you are and your will." You have to say thank you because God answers every prayer you and I have ever asked for.

On the other side, he might provide it. When he provides it, what is our response? I deserve it. No, of course not. Our response is, "Thank you." Either way. That's why the Scripture says, "In all things make your supplications known to God" with griping, with complaining. No, with thanksgiving. Whatever prayer you ask, brothers, as we work our way through the Disciple's Prayer, you realize this—that God always, always, always answers your prayer. He either provides or he protects. Our response should be identically the same, and that is what?

***Audience Members:** Thank you.*

Thank you. Thank you, Lord, because he's our Father.

***Thomas:** In saying that, too, when you're not receiving an answer to prayer, it's not because you don't need it. He has something better for you...*

Absolutely.

Thomas: ...and you just need to wait.

In John 14:13 again, “Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do,” the word “name” is an important concept for us to understand. The word “name” is a reflection of the character attributes and character of the person’s whose name you’re evoking. In other words, the name is the summary of total being of the person whose name you’re evoking. When you say that I’m praying in your name, you’re saying I’m praying with all the attributes that I know of you that are consistent with who you are and your nature. For us, we studied the 28 attributes of God. That’s says when I say “In Jesus’ name,” I’m saying that I’m praying a prayer that is absolutely consistent with all the character, all the attributes and all the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. My prayer is in his name. Essentially it means this, applicationally—the prayer that I just prayed is the same prayer that Jesus would have prayed if he were in my shoes right now. That’s what it means when you say, “I pray in your name.” It doesn’t mean that you add the little appendage, “I pray in Jesus’ name” to make sure that your prayer is going to be accepted and to make sure that it’s correct. You’re saying this—it’s consistent with who you are. That’s what it means. Those are the ones that he says that I will do, not the flippant ones that we say in Jesus’ name, “Give me this,” and he becomes a heavenly go-for—he goes for this and goes for that. That’s not what we talking about. We’re talking about something that you understand. You see, prayer is really for God and his glory. He honors himself by protecting us or providing for us through the answer of our prayers.

Audience Member: Bruce, can you speak to the issue about people who will pray [UNCLEAR] to God or to Jesus [UNCLEAR] dear Heavenly Father or dear Lord Jesus?

I think we’re going to get into that when we see the first words, “Our Father.” We’ll get into that in just a moment, and we’ll address that.

Break out your notes, please. Let’s see, we’re about ready...I think I’ll just take a break here and we’ll pick this up next week. Bring back your handout for next week. It’s now time for us to break. Take a look at your notes. We’re going to start with understanding what it means to say, “Our Father.” Notice this, this is a family prayer, not an individual prayer. It doesn’t say “my Father,” it says what?

Audience Members: Our Father.

Our Father. What does that mean? It’s a family prayer. It means when you are praying this prayer, in this manner, praying about these issues and these matters in this methodology, you’re praying a prayer that impacts the entire family of God. So my prayer is impacting the entire family because I’m praying to “Our Father,” not my Father. Notice, “Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Give us this day, our daily bread.” It doesn’t say “give me.” What are you praying when you say “give us”? You’re praying for every other member of the family of God. This is a family communal prayer, not one just for me, individually. Now it’s not given for us to recite flippantly or thoughtlessly. That’s why we want to spend our time so that when you do recite this prayer in your worship service, should you choose to do that, you’ll have understanding of each of these concepts, these words and these ideas that Jesus is teaching us when we pray. It doesn’t say how you pray. He says “when you pray,” this is how you do it. We’ll pick that up next week.

Let’s pray. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done. And may it be so for Jesus sake. And all the Brave Men said...Amen!!