



Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today’s study.

Jesus Teaches About Giving, About Kindness

¹ "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

Q1. *Acts of righteousness*: What is “righteousness”?

 **Definition:** Righteousness (noun)

1. The quality or state of being morally sound:

Synonyms: good, goodness, morality, probity, rectitude, rightness, uprightness, virtue, virtuousness.

2. The moral quality of a course of action:

Synonyms: ethic (used in plural), ethicality, ethicalness, morality, propriety, rightfulness, rightness.

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Q2. *Acts of righteousness*: What are some examples of “acts of righteousness”?

①

②


③

Q3. *Acts of righteousness*: Why would a person want their “*acts of righteousness*” to be seen by other people? What might be their motivation?

Why ... to be seen?

What ... motivation?

Q4. *Acts of righteousness*: Why would God disregard “*acts of righteousness*” that are seen by other people?

 “Matthew 6 is the second of three chapters containing Matthew's telling of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. This passage is one of the few chapters entirely composed of the words of Christ. A primary theme of Jesus' teaching

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so far is how God the Father cares about the hearts of His people, not just their outward actions. Thoughts and attitudes can be sins, just as much as words and deeds. Here, Jesus expands on this, pointing out that even ‘good deeds’ must be motivated by sincerity in order to be truly righteous. Putting on the appearance of piety in order to earn the praise of others is not pleasing to God.” [© Copyright 2002-2025 Got Questions Ministries. All rights reserved. <https://www.bibleref.com/Matthew/6/Matthew-chapter-6.html>, accessed: 03/03/2026.]

Q5. **Acts of righteousness:** God wants us to focus on Him in obedience as we demonstrate His love to others in this world. If we, who believe, made a showy spectacle of our “**acts of righteousness**”, ① would it promote friendly competition among Believers (“Watch and learn”)?


② Or eventually tend to squelch (stifle) other Believers (“My work is not good enough”)?

① Promote friendly competition? Yes? No? (Thoughts?)

② Squelch others? Yes? No? (Thoughts?)

Additional thoughts?

Day 2

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² "So, when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

Q6. **So, when you give to the needy:** “When” is such a little word. What is Jesus’ expectation in His statement, “When you give to the needy” versus an alternate “if you give to the needy”?

Q7. **Do not announce it with trumpets:** When you read this phrase, what comes to mind?

Proverbs 27:2 [The Message (MSG)]

Don’t call attention to yourself; let others do that for you.

 **Do not announce it with trumpets:** Commentators have differing opinions on the meaning of this phrase: examples include ① the religious leaders upon arrival in a destitute neighborhood used heralds to sound a trumpet, which summoned the poor to them and their generosity (Ellicott and Benson); ② the religious leaders loved the clang of coins dropped into a synagogue’s trumpet-shaped metal collection box (Ellicott); and ③ trumpets were used in some aspects of Jewish worship, and religious leaders deliberately timed their benevolence to coincide with the


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trumpet calls (BibleRef.com). While the precise meaning of Jesus' use of "trumpets" has been lost to us, the underlying message is not: Do not allow your arrogance, pride, ego, self-importance, and self-aggrandizement to be motives in your charity to others. Extend charity – secretly – out of kindness, 'paying it forward' because of Jesus' vast eternal love and care for you!


Jesus the Creator knows human nature and wants to make a clear boundary between motives that honor self, versus motives that honor God. A person could say, "Let me demonstrate to others my charity out of my poverty." Jesus knows that motive will slowly transform into self-honor – it is human nature. There is a clear demarcation, and God-honoring charity demands secrecy.

Q8. ***They have received their reward in full:*** Why did Jesus pronounce that the religious leaders had received their reward?

Q9. ***As the hypocrites do:*** Why are the religious leaders "hypocrites"?


 ***Hypocrites:*** "[derived from Greek history in which stage actors are] those who play a part, . . . whose actions are not the true reflection of their thoughts, whose religion is external and unreal. Such men begin by deceiving others, but end in self-deception. It is against these that our Lord's severest reproofs are delivered." [©1882 and later, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges by Cambridge University Press. Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/john/10-3.htm>, accessed: 03/04/2026.]

Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Q10. ***Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing:*** This phrase seems kind of nonsensical. How would you explain it to a nonbeliever or a 'baby' Christian?

 "[A]s this passage shows, selfish motivations can even take the 'good' out of 'good deeds'. [Jesus'] current example is giving to the needy in order to be praised for spirituality and generosity. [He] called people with such motivation hypocrites.

"Here, He gives the correct model for Christian giving to meet the needs of others: secrecy for the sake of authentic integrity. Once again using hyperbole [hi-PER-ba-lee] — meaning "exaggerating for effect" — Jesus tells His audience not even to let their left hand know what their right hand is doing when giving to the needy. This emphasizes the level to which Christians need to avoid letting worldly praise motivate their actions. It also

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suggests that we can be just as motivated by egotism, meaning praise from ourselves to ourselves, as by the admiration of other people.”

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Q11. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you: How might we be rewarded?

Revelation 20:12-13 [NIV-1984]

[Excerpt from the Great White Throne Judgment]

¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books.

¹³ The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done.

Prayer is a Conversation With The Lord

⁵ "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full.

Q12. Hypocrites . . . love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men: When does a prayer fail to honor God?


Q13. **They have received their reward in full:** Why did Jesus state that “they have received their reward in full”?

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Q14. **Hypocrites . . . love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men:** Is it ever appropriate “to be seen by others” praying? (How about praying in a restaurant before a meal?)

Yes? No? (Thoughts?)

Day 4

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⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Q15. **Close the door and pray to your Father:** How would your prayers change if you prayed in public versus privately? (Hints: would you be self-conscious? Would you worry about your audience and their comments?)

Public prayer?

Private prayer?

Q16. **Go into your room:** What kind of room is Jesus suggesting we use for prayer?

Q17. **Close the door and pray to your Father:** Why is privacy important to the act of prayer?

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Q18. **Close the door and pray to your Father:** The commentary in the StudySheet for [Lesson 8: 2 Corinthians 6:14-18 & 7:1-16, pages 11-13](#), encourages the prayer life of (1) a husband and wife or (2) a single person and Jesus (see 3rd paragraph beginning “If you take the promise in 1 Timothy 2:5”).

① Should this prayer-time be private? ② Or can we allow others to participate or ③ to be in the room with us?


① Private? Yes? No? (Thoughts?)

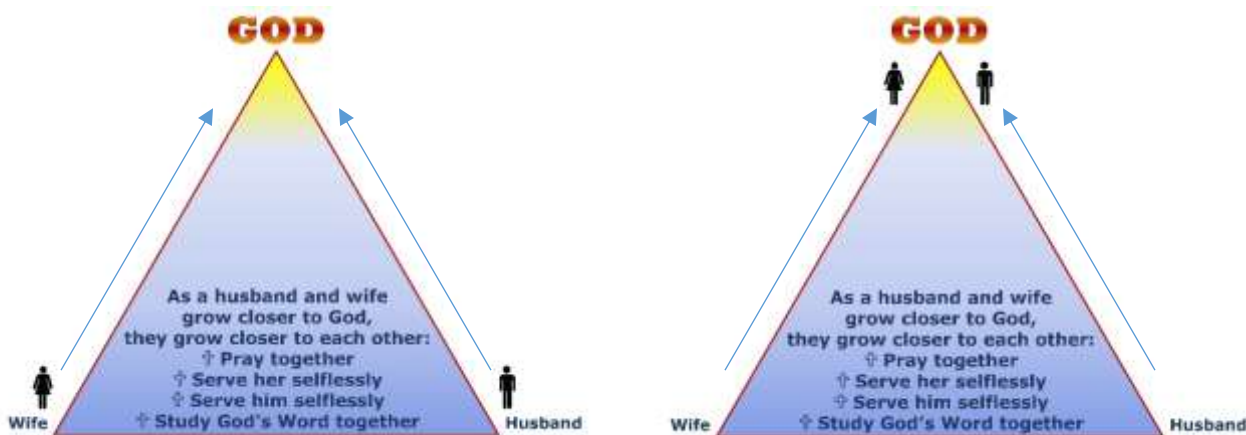
② Others can participate? Yes? No? (Thoughts?)

③ Be in the room? Yes? No? (Thoughts?)

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 [NIV-1984]

¹⁶ Be joyful always; ¹⁷ pray continually; ¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.


 While a prayer-partnership (two or more people) is vital, so is additional time alone in prayer – in private – between you and the Lord. This alone-time with Jesus allows you to confess and repent of any sins that you believe you cannot share with anyone. This alone-time allows you to converse with the Creator ([John 1:2](#)) and ask for guidance or help. This alone-time allows you to pray: to pour-out your heart, to praise the Lord, to ask for help, to ask for courage, to discuss hopes and dreams, to ask for appropriate words when speaking to someone in general or in a specific situation, to honor the Lord, to read aloud particularly moving passages from Scripture, to confess and repent, to thank the Lord, when you are in the world to allow nonbelievers to see in you an example of a Christ-loving servant, to tell the Lord about your day or plans for the day. May your prayers be led by the Spirit.



As a husband and wife (or a single and Jesus) grow in faith, they come closer and closer to God . . . and each other.


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Day 5


 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words.

Q19. ***Do not keep on babbling like pagans:*** How can we, who believe, determine if a prayer might be considered “babbling”?

 ***Babbling:*** “The original word here is supposed to be derived from the name of a Greek poet, who made long and weary verses, declaring by many forms and endless repetitions the same sentiment. Hence, it means to repeat a thing often; to say the same thing in different words, or to repeat the same words, as though God did not hear at first. An example of this we have in 1 Kings 18:26; ‘They called on Baal from morning until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us!’ . . . [This commentator edited Albert Barnes’ commentary due to length; the missing section is worth your read if time permits.]


Like pagans: “The original word is that which is commonly translated ‘Gentile’. The world was divided into two parts, the Jews and the Gentiles; that is, in the original, the ‘nations’, the nations destitute of the true religion. Christ does not fix the length of our prayers. He says that we should not repeat the same thing, as though God did not hear; and it is not improbable that he intended to condemn the practice of long prayers. His own supplications were remarkably short.” [©1834, Notes on the Bible by Albert Barnes. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/matthew/6-7.htm>, accessed: 03/07/2026.]

 **Definition:** babble (bāb’əl) noun; (also v. bab·bled, bab·bling, bab·bles)

1. Inarticulate or meaningless talk or sounds.
2. Idle or foolish talk; chatter.
3. A continuous low, murmuring sound, as of flowing water.

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Q20. What is a ‘formulaic (formula) prayer’?

 “Formulaic (formula) prayers are structured, often repetitive, or acronym-based models designed to guide worship, focus intention, and aid in developing a spiritual life, with common examples including ACTS (Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication) and the PRAY framework (Praise, Repent, Ask, Yield). These methods provide necessary structure and words when individuals are struggling to pray.” [Source: Google AI, accessed: 03/08/2026.]

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Q21. **Do not keep on babbling like pagans:** Could a ‘formulaic prayer’ be considered “babbling”?

Yes? No? (Thoughts?)

 At one time in my faith-walk, I developed, what I call, a formulaic prayer. It had a number of set petitions and blessing requests followed by scores of names (“Please, Lord, bless, keep safe, and watch over the following people . . .”). Over time, my prayer degenerated into a recitation of petitions and names that I rattled-off as quickly as I could. There was little-to-no emotion, no true thankfulness, no honoring of the Lord – just me fulfilling a self-imposed obligation as I recited words. When I started saying this formulaic prayer, I had the best of intentions; however, in hindsight my prayers failed to be meaningful, failed to honor God; I was just checking the ‘prayer’ box on my daily to-do list; it became a lucky charm – insurance – I fulfilled my part. So. Don’t be like me, learn from my mistakes.

Q22. **Do not keep on babbling like pagans:** Could your prayer of thanks before a meal be considered “babbling”? (Hint: is it a rote recitation? Does it convey thoughtful thanksgiving? Is it hurried – the quicker the better?)

Yes? No? (Thoughts?)

Matthew 14:19 [NIV-1984]

And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.

Luke 24:30 [NIV-1984]

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them.

Matthew 26:26-27 [NIV-1984]

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks, and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

²⁷ Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and offered it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you.

Q23. **Do not keep on babbling like pagans:** In verse 9 we will begin studying The Lord’s Prayer. If we repeat The Lord’s Prayer over-and-over during our prayer time, does it honor God?

Yes? No? (Thoughts?)

Luke 18:1-8 [NIV-1984]

[Jesus told this parable about the persistent widow and the judge:]

¹ Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give

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up. ² He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. ³ And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

⁴ "For some time he refused. But finally, he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care about men, ⁵ yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually wear me out with her coming!' "

⁶ And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. ⁷ And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"



During a rare overnight visit to my grandmother's house, this six- or seven-year-old boy was allowed to sleep with Grandma! I climbed into her bed, settled my head on the pillow, and . . . heard her mumbling. I asked what she was saying. She said that she had arthritis, and many years ago she began repeating The Lord's Prayer three times before falling asleep. She credited her repeated recitations of The Lord's Prayer with stopping the progression of her arthritis.

I do not know if she prayed other words or petitions, but my Grandma had faith that reciting The Lord's Prayer stopped her arthritis. I do not remember (that is, if at that age I could even recognize the difference) if her prayers were a monotone recitation of words or if she repeated the words of The Lord's Prayer slowly and meaningfully.

Bottom-line: God wants us to have heartfelt conversations with Him. Think of conversations that you have had with your best friend forever – the one from your youth with whom you trusted with every one of your secrets. God wants that same kind of BFF relationship with us, along with the trusted conversations!

Q24. ***Do not keep on babbling like pagans:*** Some of these verses and comments appear to conflict (e.g., repeat, don't repeat). What might be some good guidelines to keep in mind as we pray?

① Be sincere

②

③


④

⑤

⑥

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Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

Q25. This is a thorny statement. If God “knows what [we] need before [we] ask”, why should we pray?

Romans 8:26 [NIV-1984]

In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.

Hebrew 7:25 [NIV-1984]

Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Psalms 13:5-6 [The Message (MSG)]

I've thrown myself headlong into your arms — I'm celebrating your rescue. I'm singing at the top of my lungs, I'm so full of answered prayers.

Psalms 31:22 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]


In my distress, I said, “God cannot see me!” But you heard my prayer when I cried out to you for help.

Psalms 34:15 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

The Lord sees the good people. He listens to their prayers.

Psalms 40:1 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

I waited patiently for the Lord. He turned to me and heard my cry.

 “Repeating the same words over-and-over like a magic incantation is no way to ensure that God will hear your prayer. It's not wrong to come to God many times with the same requests — Jesus encourages persistent prayer. But He condemns the shallow repetition of words that are not offered with a sincere heart. We can never pray too much if our prayers are honest and sincere. Before you start to pray, make sure you mean what you say.”
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