



Message Series Guide

Without Ceasing

Part 10 – Praying in Secret

Matthew 6:5-6

We are busy people who live in a noisy world and often manage hectic schedules. It is extremely difficult to find quality time to spend with our friends and family, much less quiet and private time to spend with our Heavenly Father. However, in condemning the Pharisees for their outward appearances of righteousness, Jesus taught that we are to go to a “place of privacy” to be alone with God in prayer. Praying only for the purpose of receiving outward praise and recognition leads to rewards that are earthly, temporary and meaningless. The Gospels indicate that Jesus often retreated to lonely places to pray to His Heavenly Father. The promise for praying in secret is that our Heavenly Father will see us in secret and give us rewards that are eternal, spiritual and transforming to our soul.

READ:

Matthew 6:5-6 • Mark 1:35; 6:46 • Luke 5:16; 6:12; 9:18; 11:1 • Matthew 26:36 • John 12:43

- According to Matthew 6:5-6, how are we NOT to pray? How were the Pharisees praying in the wrong manner? According to Jesus, what should be our motive in prayer?
- What are the results/rewards when we pray only to be recognized by others? In contrast, according to Jesus’ teachings, what are the results/rewards when we pray in secret?
- Does verse 6 suggest that we should never pray in public? Why or why not?
- How did Jesus demonstrate the importance of praying in lonely places? If Jesus was God, why did He need to retreat to secluded places to pray?
- How does privacy and seclusion enhance our fellowship and prayer life with the Lord?

DISCUSS:

- Have you seen people pray like those described in Matthew 6:5-6? How did it make you feel? Why do you think Jesus taught His believer to do certain things in secret (giving, fasting, praying)?
- What are some bad prayer habits you’ve developed through the years? What steps have you taken to “change” some of those habits?
- Do you feel closer to God when you pray in public or in private? Explain. What is the benefit of both?
- Do you have a private place of prayer? If so, describe it. If not, what can you do to establish a place of privacy where you meet with the Lord on a regular basis to pray?
- Some of the benefits of praying in secret are 1.) It creates intentionality; 2.) It allows for privacy; 3.) It produces intimacy with the Lord; and 4.) It results in integrity. Which of these are you missing in your prayer life and which of these do you need to focus on to continuing building a life of prayer?

PRAY:

Pray that you will be intentional (like Jesus) to retreat often to quiet and secluded places for times of fellowship and secret prayer with your Heavenly Father.

RESPOND:

If you have not established a “place of privacy” where you go on a regular basis to pray to the Lord, consider how you might create such a space. Then be intentional to go there often to spend time with your Heavenly Father.