

**AN EXCERPT FROM
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO**

MATTHEW

**VOLUME 1
(CHAPTER 6:5-24)**

**THE
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NEW TESTAMENT

KING JAMES VERSION

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DEDICATED

To all the men and women of the world who
preach and teach the Gospel of
our Lord Jesus Christ and
to the Mercy and Grace of God

&

- Demonstrated to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.” (Eph. 1:7)

- Out of the mercy and grace of God, His Word has flowed. Let every person know that God will have mercy upon him, forgiving and using him to fulfill His glorious plan of salvation.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” (Jn.3:16-17)

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim.2:3-4)

The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible®

is written for God's ser-
vants to use in their
study, teaching, and
preaching of God's Holy
Word...

- to share the Word of God with the world.
- to help the believer, both minister and layman alike, in his understanding, preaching, and teaching of God's Word.
- to do everything we possibly can to lead men, women, boys and girls to give their hearts and lives to Jesus Christ and to secure the eternal life which He offers.
- to do all we can to minister to the needy of the world.
- to give Jesus Christ His proper place, the place the Word gives Him. Therefore, no work of Leadership Ministries Worldwide will ever be personalized.

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Every child of God is precious to the Lord and deeply loved. And every child as a servant of the Lord touches the lives of those who come in contact with him or his ministry. The writing ministries of the following servants have touched this work, and we are grateful that God brought their writings our way. We hereby acknowledge their ministry to us, being fully aware that there are so many others down through the years whose writings have touched our lives and who deserve mention, but the weaknesses of our minds have caused them to fade from memory. May our wonderful Lord continue to bless the ministries of these dear servants, and the ministries of us all as we diligently labor to reach the world for Christ and to meet the desperate needs of those who suffer so much.

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***“Woe to me if I preach
not the gospel!”
(1 Cor.9:16)***

<p>1 The wrong motive: Praying to be seen by men a. Place: In public 1) Only in the synagogue 2) Only in the streets b. Reason: For recognition c. Reward: Man's esteem</p> <p>2 The right motive: Praying to be heard by God a. Place: In one's own closet or private place b. Reason: God is in one's secret or private place^{DS4} c. Reward: Will receive open blessings</p>	<p>L. The Right Motive for Prayer^{DS1,2,3} (Part I), 6:5-6</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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DIVISION IV

**THE TEACHINGS OF THE MESSIAH TO HIS DISCIPLES:
THE GREAT SERMON ON THE MOUNT, 5:1-7:29**

L. The Right Motive for Prayer (Part I), 6:5-6

(6:5-6) **Introduction—Prayer—Motive:** this passage is speaking to *those who pray*—people who take prayer seriously. Prayer is one of the greatest acts of the Christian believer. Talking to God, whether by thought or tongue, is the way a believer fellowships with God; and the one thing God desires is fellowship with man (Is.43:10). Thus, it is essential that we pray and pray often, sharing all day long.

However, that we *do* pray is not the concern of Christ in this point. His concern is *how* we pray. It is possible to pray amiss, with the wrong motive and in the wrong way. It is possible to pray and never be heard by God. It is possible to pray and to be speaking only to ourselves, to have our prayer go no higher than our own ears. Therefore, Christ sets out to teach us the right and wrong motives for praying.

1. The wrong motive: praying to be seen by men (v.5).
2. The right motive: praying to be heard by God (v.6).

DEEPER STUDY # 1

(6:5-8) **Prayer:** there are dangers surrounding prayer, some negative factors that must be guarded against.

1. Prayer can become hypocritical (v.5). A person can pray for the wrong reasons, with the wrong motives.
2. Prayer can become habit-forming (v.5). Prayer is a wonderful experience, very rewarding emotionally and mentally and in having our needs met as God answers our prayer. We can begin to *love praying* and still be praying amiss.
3. Prayer can become connected with certain places (v.5). A believer has places that mean much to him in his prayer life, but he must guard against limiting God's presence only to those places, even if it is the church.
4. Prayer can become empty repetition (v.7). A person can take any phrase or form of prayer and make it a meaningful experience, or make it a formal and meaningless occasion. (Note how often the Lord's Prayer is repeated by rote memory with the mind focused elsewhere.)
5. Prayer can become too long (v.7). A believer can begin to feel he is heard because of "much speaking" (cp. Eccl.5:1-2).
6. Prayer can become self-glorifying (v.8). A person can begin to feel he must inform and convince God of his *great* need. When the answer comes (out of the mercy of God, despite praying amiss), the believer begins to *glory in his spirituality*—that he has what it takes to get things from God.
7. Prayer can become self-deceptive (v.7-8). A person can begin to think he is heard (1) because of "much speaking" and (2) because he convinces God of his need.

DEEPER STUDY # 2

(6:5-6) **Prayer:** note several things.

1. Christ says "When thou prayest." He is referring to personal prayer (cp. v.6).
2. Christ assumes that the believer does pray, and the idea conveyed is that the believer prays often.
3. Christ says there is a right way and a wrong way to pray. "When thou prayest, thou shalt not...." vs. "But thou, when thou prayest...."
4. Christ says that some "love to pray," and they are the very ones who commit this fault. They pray amiss, with the wrong motive.
5. Christ pictures two men praying. One man prays to men (v.5); the other man prays to the Father (v.6). The first man is a hypocrite; the second man is a true son of the Father.

DEEPER STUDY # 3

(6:5-6) **Prayer:** believers are expected to pray. Prayer is God's appointed medium through which He acts for man. *Sharing and talking* together is the way all persons communicate, fellowship, and commune together. This is true both with men and God. Prayer requires our presence, sharing, and talking; and God wants to fellowship and commune with us. Few persons heed this fact; few persons take prayer seriously. Therefore, if we want the blessings of God upon our lives and ministries—if we want the work of God going forth in power and bearing fruit—we must pray and we must intercede in prayer.

“Pray to thy Father” (Mt.6:6; cp. Mt.6:7).

“After this manner pray ye” (Mt.6:9).

“Pray ye the Lord of the harvest” (Mt.9:38; Lk.10:2).

“Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation” (Mt.26:41; Mk.13:33; 14:38; Lk. 21:36; 22:40, 46).

“Men ought always to pray, and not to faint” (Lk.18:1).

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints” (Eph.6:18).

“Pray without ceasing” (I Th.5:17).

“I will that men pray everywhere” (I Tim.2:8).

1 (6:5) **Prayer—Motive:** the wrong motive for prayer is praying to be seen by men. Two preliminary things need to be looked at before discussing this point.

1. Praying—even loving to pray—is not a sign that a person really knows God.

2. The fact that a person really knows God means that he does pray. No matter what a man may think in his mind, if he really knows God and really believes in God, he talks to God. There is nothing that could keep him from praying. He knows God personally—knows Him as his Father who loves and cares for him ever so deeply. Therefore, just as any child who truly loves his father, the believer talks, converses, and shares with his Father.

This says something to the person who prays primarily in public and prays little, if any, in private. He must search the genuineness of his heart and profession.

Christ says that a man who prays to be seen by men *loves to pray, but he is a hypocrite.*

1. The places where he *loves to pray* are *out in public*, in the synagogue (church), and in the streets (restaurants and other public places).

Thought 1. Note five lessons.

1) Some love to pray publicly. They love representing the group and vocalizing their praise and needs to God. Some have become very charismatic and fluent at public prayer, yet they lack that essential love for private praying. Christ says, “hypocrite” (v.5).

2) Some pray only in public. They pray before their family (at meals and family prayers, usually with children); in church (when called upon); and in public (when eating in restaurants). They seldom, if ever, pray in private. How destitute is the prayer life of so many!

3) Prayer is to be offered to God both in church and in public. But public prayer is to be public, not private. Too often a person has his *personal devotions* when called upon to pray publicly. He has neglected his *private prayers* and his inner need has not been met. Thus when he begins to pray publicly, he slips into praying his own *private prayer* instead of representing the group.

4) Some hypocrites pray, and they pray much. There are some *religious people* who pray little, if any. These can learn from the hypocrites.

5) Note the posture of this hypocrite. He stood praying. This is an acceptable posture for prayer (Mk.11:25); but the picture is that of pride, arrogance, and self-confidence. Kneeling is a picture of humility, reverence, and dependence upon God (Lk.22:41; Eph.3:14).

“Be of the same mind one toward another, Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits” (Ro.12:16).

“For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Gal.6:3).

“For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world” (1 Jn.2:16).

“Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith” (Hab.2:4).

2. The man who prays only in public prays for only one reason: not because he loves to pray but because he loves recognition.

Thought 1. Note two lessons.

1) The sin is not failing to pray. The sin is praying *only* in church and in public. A person who prays publicly but seldom prays privately fools himself. Christ says real prayer (prayer to the Father) matters nothing to that person. He prays only for recognition—to be heard by men.

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- 2) Praying publicly should be done. There is a great danger, however, in public prayer: having one's pride stroked. It is so easy to be praying publicly and have self-centered thoughts run across one's mind...
 - that one is really praying a good prayer. Such prayer is nothing but waxing eloquent with words.
 - that one's prayer will surely be admired
 - that one's prayer is really demonstrating a close walk with God (a deep spirituality)

“Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Mt.15:7-8).

“And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know” (1 Cor.8:2).

“When pride cometh, then cometh shame: but with the lowly is wisdom” (Pr.11:2).

“Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall” (Pr.16:18).

“Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!” (Is.5:21).

3. The man who prays only in public receives his reward: public recognition. Three things need to be clearly seen about this man.
 - a. He will experience good feelings and satisfying thoughts about his spiritual state and religious piety. He will possess a good self-image and some confidence in his standing with God. The esteem and praise of men and feeling good about what he has done gives him a good self image. *But* in this case it is a false self-image.
 - b. He has cheated himself, really missed out on the most intimate presence and greatest future in the universe. He has lost his soul. He shall never hear, “Well done thou good and faithful servant” (Mt.25:21).
 - c. He gets just what he deserves: public recognition. If he places so little value upon sharing with God Himself, he deserves no more than what man can give him—human recognition.

Thought 1. Man's esteem fails at several points.

- 1) Man's esteem is temporary. Everything passes—ever so quickly. Man soon forgets and moves on to other things.
- 2) Man's esteem becomes commonplace. Even the greatest skills that elicit praise become routine and commonplace to man when performed day by day. Soon man no longer acknowledges his uniqueness. Such abilities are merely expected and accepted; he no longer elicits praise and recognition.
- 3) Man's esteem is powerless. It cannot answer prayer; it can only recognize man's ability to put words together and to see man's expression, fervency, and emotion. Its power is limited to the things of this world, and that power is even limited and short lived. Man's esteem can do absolutely nothing about the spiritual needs of his heart.
- 4) Man's esteem is not to be the judge of his life—God is. No man is any greater than any other man; men are mere men. All men have the same need: to turn to God in prayer, praying for His acceptance and recognition. Therefore, the esteem of man *by men* is meaningless in light of judgment and eternity.

“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away” (1 Pt.1:24).

“Nevertheless man being in honour abideth not: he is like the beasts that perish” (Ps.49:12).

“For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him” (Ps.49:17).

“As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame” (Hos.4:7).

2 (6:6) **Prayer—Motive:** the right motive for prayer is praying to be heard by God. Three preliminary things need to be looked at in this point.

1. The willingness to take time to pray: “When thou prayest.” There has to be the will to pray. The believer must take time to get alone to pray. Too few ever take time to pray, and even fewer spend more than a few minutes in prayer. Too many stay all wrapped up in the world and its day-to-day affairs, some of which are necessary, but how much more necessary is prayer!

2. A closet is a necessity. The believer must have a private place deliberately chosen for prayer.

3. A personal relationship with God: a *Father-son* relationship is absolutely essential. God is our *Father*; He is available as fathers are available to their children. We are to go to Him in prayer, sharing and communing with Him. We are to allow Him to shower us with His care and protection, meeting our every need (Ps.91:1).

Note: Christ says that a man who is genuine prays to be heard by God and not by men.

1. The place he chooses for prayer is in his private closet. Christ says: “Get alone”; “Enter your closet...shut your door.” Be unobserved, undisturbed, and unheard. (Cp. 2 Ki.4:33; Is.26:20.)

- a. *Get alone:* unobserved—out of everyone's sight.
- b. *Get alone:* undisturbed—avoid interruptions and disturbances.
- c. *Get alone:* unheard—concentrate and meditate to allow God the freedom to work in your heart as He wishes.

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“On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour” (Acts 10:9).

“And Cornelius said, Four days ago I was fasting until this hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and, behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing” (Acts 10:30).

“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” (Mt.6:6).

“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” (Mk.1:35).

“And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land” (Mk.6:46-47).

“And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God” (Lk.6:12).

“And he was withdrawn from them about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down, and prayed. Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine, be done” (Lk.22:41-42).

2. The reason the believer prays in his private closet is because God is in secret (see note—Mt.6:4). Note two significant facts.

- a. God “is in secret”; therefore, a person can meet God only in *secret*. Even in the midst of a worshipping crowd, a person must concentrate and focus his attention upon God who is unseen. There must be a secret heart-to-heart meeting and communion if a person wishes to pray and truly share with God.
- b. God “is in secret”; therefore, He is not interested in show, but in substance. Show is before men. Substance is found in the secret, quiet, meditative place. Remember: everything that exists began with an idea, and the development of the idea came from *private and quiet thought and meditation*, not out in the public before people—at least not often. The same is true of spiritual matters. Spiritual show takes place before people, but spiritual substances or qualities that really matter take place in secret. When the believer pours out his heart, he receives his greatest encouragement and strength in the secret place of the Most High, not in the public places of mere man.

Thought 1. Many pray on the run; few pray in secret. Why do so few have a quiet time, a daily worship and devotional time? Why do so few keep their daily appointment with God? This is one of the most difficult things in the world to understand in light of who God is and in light of man’s desperate plight and need. No man would ever fail to keep his appointment with the state leader of his nation.

- 1) Many say they do not have the time, so they do not take the time. But in all honesty, it takes only a little effort to get up a while earlier in the morning—if they are really all that pressed for time. All they need to do is to rearrange their schedule to allow for a quiet time just as they arrange for any other important meeting. However, few do this; therefore, they are without excuse. Many believers are faithful in meeting God daily. It is just a matter of discipline and priority.
- 2) Most have the time; they just do not take the time. They neglect getting alone with God consistently.
- 3) Many have not been taught the importance and benefit of a quiet time with God every day. This is a justified accusation against Christian parents, preachers, and teachers. So few have practiced and stressed what they have always heard about the importance of prayer. The silence of believers and their failure to reach the world in sound doctrine is unbelievable, especially after two thousand years.
- 4) Some have not yet learned to discipline themselves and to be consistent in their spiritual lives. There is no better area to learn discipline and consistency than in a daily quiet time. A person should just begin and do it. When a day is missed, a person should flee discouragement, “forgetting those things which are behind” and reach forth to a new day and begin again. Eventually, consistency and discipline will be learned, and the person’s soul will be fed with the “unsearchable riches of Christ” (Eph.3:8, 20; cp. Ph.3:13).

3. The reward of the genuine prayer warrior is open blessings. The praying believer will be rewarded in two very special ways.

- a. The strength and presence of God will be upon his life (Ezra 8:22; 1 Pt.5:6). God’s presence is unmistakable. There is a difference between a person who walks in God’s presence and a person who walks only in this world (Mt.6:25-34, esp.33).

God rewards the praying believer with His presence and blessings. The believer’s needs, material and spiritual, are met day by day.

- b. The believer’s prayers will also be answered (Mt.21:22; Jn.16:24; 1 Jn.5:14-15). The answers to prayer are clearly seen by a thinking and honest observer. God has promised to answer the true prayer of a genuine believer. God takes care of the genuine believer with a very special care. Sometimes the answer is seen...
 - in a renewed strength.

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Eph.3:20).

- in a provision of some necessity.

“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mt.6:33).

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- in a conquest of some great temptation or trial.

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it” (1 Cor.10:13).

- in a peace that passes all human understanding.

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Ph.4:6-7).

- in a soundness of mind that is incomprehensible.

“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Tim.1:7).

Thought 1. The praying believer, the believer who becomes a true intercessor, will be rewarded openly on that special day of redemption.

- 1) God “wonders that there [is] no man, and...no intercessor” (Is.59:16).
- 2) Christ, the Great Intercessor, “ever liveth to make intercession for them” (Heb.7:25).
- 3) The interceding believer shall stand openly in a very special relationship with Jesus, the Great Intercessor Himself, before God the Father.

“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (Mt.21:22).

“And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (Lk.11:9).

“And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it” (Jn.14:13-14).

“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (Jn.15:7).

“Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (Jn.16:24).

“And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight” (1 Jn.3:22).

“And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him” (1 Jn.5:14-15).

DEEPER STUDY # 4

(6:6) **Prayer:** “Your Father is in secret...” *Secret* means three things.

1. Concentration: meditation, contemplation, thinking deeply upon God and sharing accordingly.
2. Apart from all: secluded, alone, private, out of view from all.
3. Unseen: invisible, yet there; believing and having faith that God is there; spiritual, but still hearing and responding. Every believer should have a secret, quiet place that is dear to his heart, dear because it is the place where he draws near to God and God draws near to him. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3—Jn.1:48.)

	M. The Three Great Rules for Prayer, (Part II) 6:7-8
1 Rule 1: Do not use empty repetition ^{DS1}	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.
2 Rule 2: Do not speak much	
3 Rule 3: Trust God	8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.
a. He knows your needs	
b. He desires to hear your prayer	

DIVISION IV

THE TEACHINGS OF THE MESSIAH TO HIS DISCIPLES: THE GREAT SERMON ON THE MOUNT, 5:1-7:29

M. The Three Great Rules for Prayer (Part II), 6:7-8

(6:7-8) **Introduction:** among the religious there is often a tendency toward long prayers, particularly in public. Too often people measure prayer by its fluency and length, thinking that length means devotion. “Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth; therefore let thy words be few” (Eccl.5:2). Christ puts the matter very simply, yet strongly: “When ye pray,” follow three great rules.

1. Rule 1: do not use empty repetition (v.7).
2. Rule 2: do not speak much (v.7).
3. Rule 3: trust God (v.8).

1 (6:7) **Prayer—Repetition:** the first great rule of prayer is striking—do not use empty repetition (see DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt.6:7). There are several things that lend themselves to empty repetition.

1. Memorized prayer: just saying the words of a form prayer, for example, the Lord’s prayer. There is nothing wrong with praying a memorized prayer, but it should be prayed through and not just repeated with no thought behind the words.
2. Written, well-worded prayers: thinking that what we say is so expressive and so well worded that it is bound to carry weight with God. The words may be descriptive and beautifully arranged, but the heart must be offering the prayer, not the mind and ego. Such prayer is empty repetition.
3. Ritual prayer: saying the same prayer at the same time on the same occasion—over and over again. This can soon become empty repetition.
4. Formal worship: praying in the same way on a rigid schedule can lead to praying by habit (repeated practice) with little or no meaning to it.
5. Thoughtless prayer: speaking words while our minds are wandering. Being tired is no excuse. It is better not to pray than to pray insincerely.
6. Religious words and phrases: using certain words or phrases over and over in prayer (just because they are religious sounding). (Compare using such words over and over as *mercy, grace, I thank thee O God, in Jesus’ name.*)
7. Habitual references to God: using such empty repetition as “Lord this,” and “Lord that,” and “Lord here,” and “Lord there,” and “Lord...,” “Lord...,” “Lord...” How little thought is really given to approaching Him whose name is “Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (Is.9:6).

There are several things that will keep us from using empty repetition in prayer.

1. A genuine heart: really knowing God personally and having a moment-by-moment fellowship with Him all day long.
2. Thought and concentration: really focusing upon what we are saying.
3. Desire for fellowship with God: praying sincerely, really meaning it.
4. Preparation: preparing ourselves for prayer by first meditating in God’s Word.

Note something of extreme importance in discussing “vain repetition.” Christ does not say repetition in prayer is wrong. It is not wrong. What is wrong is vain, empty, meaningless, foolish repetition. Christ Himself used repetition in prayer (Mt.26:44), so did Daniel (Dan.9:18-19), and so did the Psalmist (Ps.136:1f).

Thought 1. Note six lessons.

- 1) There is one major problem with the praying of believers: they do not pray enough. They do not take enough time to pray and to pray in earnest.

There is one major problem *when believers do pray*: prayer is often vain, empty, thoughtless, meaningless, and repetitive. Too often a believer prays and does not concentrate. His mind wanders off somewhere else; he only mouths the words. Such thoughtless and meaningless prayer is clearly seen in public prayer and in the powerlessness of believers today.

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- 2) There is one sure way to prepare our hearts for prayer: meditating in God's Word.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim.3:16).

It is in the Scripture that the believer learns about God, himself, and the world—the nature and truth of all things. It is the Spirit of God who takes the Word of God and moves upon the believer's heart revealing that for which the believer should pray. Therefore, the believer is stirred to pray for whatever the Word of God and the Spirit of God has shown him (Ro.8:26; cp. Jn.14:26; 16:13; 1 Cor.2:12-13).

- 3) Vain repetition in prayer, whether formal or thoughtless, is *desensitizing*.
⇒ It discourages the sincere and the newly converted.
⇒ It cools the willing and the gifted.
⇒ It stifles the committed and the mature.
⇒ It turns away the seeking and the lost.
- 4) Repetition in prayer *is* dull. Empty repetition affects worship, interest, and attendance at services.
- 5) Vain repetition is tragic. Prayer should be one of the most meaningful experiences in life. God is certainly willing to meet the believer in a very special way—anytime, anyplace. So many hearts are just...
- barren
 - dull
 - complacent
 - dry
 - hard
 - lethargic
 - desert-like
 - rusted
 - still
- So much praying is merely going over and over the same things ranging from “bless Mom and Dad” to “give us a good day tomorrow.”
- 6) Empty repetition turns God away and cuts the heart of the committed.

“Having a form of godliness [long prayers], but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Tim.3:5).

“Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, this people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me” (Mt.15:7-8).

DEEPER STUDY # 1

(6:7) **Prayer—Repetition, Vain** (battologesete): to babble much; to use many phrases; to say idle things; to say meaningless things. Vain repetition means at least two things.

1. It means saying the same words over and over again without putting one's heart and thought into what is being said.
2. It means using certain religious words or phrases (sometimes over and over again) and thinking God hears because one is using such religious talk.

2 (6:7) **Prayer, Long**: the second great rule of prayer is an eye-opener—do not speak much. Too many think that length equals devotion; that is, the longer they pray the more God will listen to them (they are showing God their sincerity), and the more spiritual they will become.

God does not hear a person's prayer because it is long, but because his heart is genuinely poured out to God. Length has nothing to do with devotion, but a sincere heart does.

Long prayers are not forbidden. What is forbidden is the idea that long prayers are automatically heard by God. Christ prayed all night (Lk.6:12). The early disciples prayed and fasted, and sought God for ten days and nights waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1f). A believer should sense the needs of the world so much that he is driven to seek God and His intervention for long periods of time, and the seeking should be often (Eph. 6:18).

Why do some pray long prayers?

1. Some feel long prayers convince God. They feel God has to be moved, nudged, and stirred to hear and answer.
2. Some feel they need long prayers to explain the situation. They feel God needs to be informed and made to understand a particular situation and how it has affected them.
3. Some feel long prayers make them more spiritual, more mature, and more devoted.
4. Some feel long prayers are just demanded of believers. It is expected; it is the religious and godly thing to do.
5. Some feel long prayers show God their sincerity. They secure God's approval by long prayers.
6. Some feel long prayers impress people. They show people just how deeply spiritual they really are.

What are ways to prevent the sins that arise from long prayers?

“Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few” (Eccl.5:2).

1. “Be not rash with thy mouth.” Control your mouth. Do not let your mouth rattle on and on without thought. It will often rush and hurry with every thought that crosses your mind.
2. Be not “hasty to utter anything before God”: sit still, be quiet, without saying a word for awhile. Do not rush forward to speak.
3. Think about who God is. Picture a man: his mouth is quiet; he has been still for some time. He has been preparing, gaining control of his mind and thoughts so he can appear before the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. He focuses his thoughts upon God, the One who is in heaven far above the earth. He meditates upon God's sovereignty and majesty. God is the center of his thoughts (Ps.46:10).

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4. “Let thy words be few.” Speak—but make your words deliberate—just as deliberate as the words of any interviewer before a sovereign ruler. Request—just as any obedient son would request of a revered father. The person who approaches God like this speaks with respect and thought, with care and love. He speaks few words and straight to the point—all from a prepared heart and mind.

When should the believer spend a long time in prayer? There *are* special times when an extended prayer time is necessary. Some of the times are clearly seen in Scripture.

1. Sometimes a special pull to praise and adore God is felt within. When the believer feels this pull, he should get alone, spending a long time praising and worshipping God (cp. Acts 16:25).

2. Sometimes a special need arises. This may be the believer’s own need or a friend’s need. He should intercede until God gives the assurance that the need will be met (Eph.6:18; cp. Acts 12:1-5, esp. v.5).

3. Sometimes an unusual experience or event has taken place or is about to take place in the believer’s life or ministry. He should get alone and share the event with God. And he should stay before God until the experience has taken place (courage, confidence, power, faith, love). (See Introduction—Mt.4:1-11.)

4. Sometimes a great trial or temptation is faced. A long session of prayer may be needed to gain strength and to keep the believer away from the trial or temptation. (See DEEPER STUDY # 1—Mt.4:1-11.)

5. Sometimes a matter needs to be worked through or a major decision needs to be made. Help and direction should be sought from God. God should be acknowledged in all of the believer’s ways. He should remain before God until the answer is given. (Cp. Acts 13:1-3, esp. 2.)

Thought 1. Prayer is a matter of the heart, not a matter of words and length. Praying is sharing; it is sharing with God just like a person shares with any other person. Just as he shares thoughts, feelings, praise, and requests with others, so he shares with God.

Thought 2. Prayer is a personal relationship. Prayer is not speaking into thin air. God may be “in secret” (v.6); He may be invisible, but He is there. He is there more than any other person who may be in our presence. He is the One whom all men are to know and to whom all men are to be vitally related. Too often, the awareness and consciousness of His presence are allowed to fade, and we just go through our long prayer with a wandering mind leaping from thought to thought. Long prayers lend themselves to this danger. How insincere! How irreverent! How often the heart of God must be cut and hurt!

Thought 3. There are prayers of believers and prayers of the heathen. A distinction is made by Christ Himself. He says that both pray.

1) The heathen pray using vain repetition and speaking empty words.

2) The believer is vitally related to God; therefore, he prays to God who is his Father. He prays to God just as a son shares with his revered father.

“But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking” (Mt.6:7).

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows’ houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation” (Mt.23:14).

“All the labor of man is for his mouth, and yet the appetite is not filled” (Eccl.6:7).

3 (6:8) **Prayer:** the third great rule of prayer is forceful—trust God.

1. God knows the believer’s need even before the believer asks. Why then should the believer pray?

Prayer demonstrates our need for God and our dependence upon God. Prayer gives time for concentrated sharing and communion between the believer and God. It is not enough for man to carry a knowledge of God in his mind as he walks through life. Man needs to have times when he is in the presence of God and can concentrate his thoughts and fellowship upon God. He needs such time with God just as he needs such time with his family and friends. Man is not meant to live in isolation from people nor from God. He must have times when he is in the presence of both man and God and can concentrate his thoughts and attention upon both.

The believer, therefore, does not pray only to have his needs met but to share and fellowship and to enrich his life with God.

Thought 1. God knows the believer’s needs. The believer does not have to worry about God’s knowing or meeting his needs. The believer’s concern should be living in the presence of God, taking enough time to share and to fellowship with God. The more he shares and fellowships with God, the more he will know God and learn to trust and to depend upon God’s care and promises.

Thought 2. God is the believer’s Father. The believer is God’s son. The believer can, therefore, *rest* in God and His promises. He does not have to strain and pray long in order for his Father to hear him. His Father already knows and cares. He is to get with His Father for long periods of time sharing and fellowshiping, learning and getting to know his Father intimately.

2. God desires to hear. God knows the believer’s need even before the believer asks (cp. 2 Chron.16:9; Is.65:24). God desires to hear and answer the believer’s prayer, to meet the believer’s needs. God desires to work for the believer’s deliverance and salvation (see outline and notes—Ro.8:23-27; 8:28-39. This is one of the great passages on assurance and confidence.)

MATTHEW 6:7-8

3. God has ordained prayer as the medium through which He blesses and moves among men. (See DEEPER STUDY # 3, *Prayer*—Mt.6:5-6; pt.2—1 Th.5:15-22).

“Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!” (Ps.31:19).

“Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about” (Ps.32:10).

“The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate” (Ps.34:22).

“They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever” (Ps.125:1).

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths” (Pr.3:5-6).

“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe” (Pr.29:25).

“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength” (Is.26:3-4).

“Blessed is the man that trusteth in the LORD, and whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green” (Jer.17:7-8).