

# Matthew: His Life And His Gospel – Part 5

**Matthew 6:1** [New King James] *“Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.”*

**It has been said that the reward motive has no place in the Christian life, on the face of this point of view it seems to be fine and noble, but it is not the point of view which Jesus Christ holds.**

**Matthew 6:2-5** [New King James] *“Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.”*

To the Jew there were three great pillars on which a good life was based –

**Almsgiving** – **not** acceptable to God if it is done to draw attention to the person making this sacrifice.

**Prayer** – a person may pray in such a way that their prayer is **not** really addressed to God but to other human beings who see them at prayer.

**Fasting** – a person may fast in a way that causes them not to be humble before the Eternal God, but simply to show other human beings what a splendidly self-disciplined character they have.

Jesus Christ tells such people that they have their reward from other people **not** from the Eternal God, [Matthew 6:2, 5, 16].

**It is the motive behind these actions that is important to the Eternal Creator God.**

**Matthew 6:6-7** [New King James] *“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.”*

**Jesus Christ then begins to give us guidelines as how we should pray to our Eternal Creator God.**

First repeating the same words again and again is **not** how God wants us to relate to Him in prayer.

Prayer is a very personal thing that should be done in private, **not** in public, [verse 6].

Vain repetitions include the use of the **guideline** for the composition of our prayers that Jesus Christ was about to give to His disciples.

**Matthew 6:8-13** [New King James] *“Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”*

**These guidelines were only for disciples.** This is still part of the “Sermon on the Mount,” [Matthew 5:1-2].

This is guidelines to prayer that only a person who is committed to Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord can use.

Note in **verse 8** that Jesus Christ tells His disciples that God the Father already knows our needs, [Psalms 139:1-16]. **Prayer is to help us fully understand how we need God in our lives, in every situation we face.**

**“Our Father”** – to start with we must remember that there are others who are praying to the same Creator God and seeking to serve and worship Him. All we say should include their needs as well as our own.

**“Father”** – this helps us to develop a deep sense of personal love and closeness of the Creator God who brought us into existence, [John 1:1-4, 14].

Paul uses the term *“Abba Father,”* words that are framed on the lips of infants and expresses unreasoning trust and confidence.

A Father who gives us every good and perfect gift, [James 1:17]. A Father who provides and protects us and guides us as we yield to His will in our lives, intervening supernaturally if we cry out for help from Him.

**“Who is in heaven”** – this reminds us that God is no ordinary Father but One who is above all beings in power, sovereignty, holiness and wisdom.

**“Hallowed be Your name”** – the Greek word translated *“hallowed”* is *“hagiazō”* meaning a state of sacred holiness, blameless, who is to be venerated. The highest degree of respect and reverence mixed with awe, **not** a title any human being should take, for it is a presumptuous sin to be called reverent as this belongs only to the Eternal Creator God, [Psalms 19:13]. *“Transgression”* is Hebrew word *“pegha”* meaning revolt or rebellion against God, [Isaiah 14:12-14 – a Satan-like thought!]

**“Name”** – is the Greek word *“ōnōma”* referring to authority and character.

**“Thy Kingdom come”** – this must be first and foremost in our minds when we pray, also in our thoughts and actions.

Are we praying every day for the return of Jesus Christ to this earth, this time as King of kings and Lord of lords, [Revelation 17:4; Revelation 19:11-16] to replace the evil rule of Satan the present *“god”* of this society? [2 Corinthians 4:4; 2 Corinthians 11:14-15; 1 John 5:19].

We have to add to our prayers for *“Thy Kingdom come”* our part in this future event.

**Ezekiel 9:4** [New King James] *“and the LORD said to him, ‘Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and cry over all the abominations that are done within it.’”*

**Pray for the victims of all this evil.**

**2 Peter 3:12-13** [New King James] *“looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.”*

How do we do this? Apply **verse 18** to our personal lives.

**1 Timothy 2:1-6** [New King James] *“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the*

*truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,”*

**We are to pray that world leaders will not try to hinder the proclaiming of the good news that Jesus Christ brought from God the Father to all humanity.**

**“Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”** – this has to start with each one of us individually, as we surrender our lives back to the Creator God who gave us life in the first place. Always remember that we are only stewards of our lives for a short period of time, [**Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20**].

**“Give us this day our daily bread”** –

**James 4:13-17** [New King James] *“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit’; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, ‘If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.’ But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.”*

We need to live in “*day tight compartments*,” we can plan about the future but **not** boast as to what we are going to accomplish, for “*tomorrow*” may not come for us personally.

Such an attitude of mind will help us to be content as far as physical things are concerned, those things that this society can offer us.

**Philippians 4:11-13** [New King James] *“Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”*

This is something we have to learn.

**1 Timothy 6:6** [New King James] *“Now godliness with contentment is great gain.”*

Paul considered that such contentment with what God allowed us to have, that we need to fulfil the work that God will bring a wonderful feeling of accomplishment.

We will then be provided with all we need to for our spiritual growth, [**Philippians 4:19**].

**John 6:51, 63, 66-68** [New King James] *“I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.” ... “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.’”*

The words of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ are all the food we need to live eternal life now, [**1 John 5:11**].

**We must never allow our contentment with physical things to creep into our attitude towards spiritual life.**

**Philippians 3:7-14** [New King James] *“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by*

*any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I **press toward** the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.”*

The spiritual goal we are to “*press towards*” is enlarged on in **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18** and **1 Corinthians 15:50-58**.

**Matthew 6:12** [New King James] “*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*”

The Greek word translated “*debts*” is “*ōphēilēō*” meaning failure in duty, morally or spiritually, guilty thus indebted to the Eternal God our Creator, Sustainer and Saviour, also **not** honouring our Spiritual Father, also **not** loving our fellow human beings as God loves us.

**Matthew 6:14-15** [New King James] “*For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*”

Jesus Christ gives us a startling warning about forgiveness, as a prompt to apply **verse 12**.

**If we refuse to forgive others, God will also refuse to forgive us. Why?**

Because when we do **not** forgive others we deny our common background as sinners who need the forgiveness for our sins, [**Romans 3:23**].

**1 John 1:8-10** [New King James] “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.*”

All who have asked for in faith that the sacrifice of our Saviour Jesus Christ may be a substitute death for our deserved death, [**Romans 6:23**] because of our sins, are but forgiven sinners.

God’s forgiveness of sins is **not** the result of our forgiving others, but it is based on our realising what forgiveness means.

**Ephesians 4:32** [New King James] “*And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.*”

**Forgiving others is basically our seeking to develop that part of the very character of the Eternal God, for forgiveness is an expression of true Godly love.**

The Greek word used for Godly love is “*agapé*” meaning a spontaneous affection and benevolence, irrespective of the “*rights*” or even response of the recipient, [**Romans 5:8**] a sacrificial love, [**John 3:16-17**] that puts aside personal desires, [**Philippians 2:5-8**] to serve the object of that love.

**It is easy to ask the Eternal God for forgiveness, but very difficult to grant this loving forgiveness to others who have wronged or hurt us.**

**So whenever we need to ask the Eternal God for forgiveness we need to first ask ourselves, “have I forgiven the people who have wronged and hurt me?”**

**Broken human relationships can hinder our relationship with the Eternal Creator God.**

**1 John 4:20-21** [New King James] “*If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.*”

**Our attitude towards other human beings reflects our true relationship with the Eternal Creator God.**

**Matthew 6:13** [New King James] *“And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”*

The Greek word translated “temptation” is “peirasmōs” meaning to put to the test by trial.

God does **not** tempt us, [**James 1:13-15**] but He does discipline us to help us to develop His Holy character, [**Hebrews 12:5-11**].

**1 Corinthians 10:13** [New King James] *“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”*

**God will not allow Satan to tempt us beyond what we are able to resist, even though it may feel like it at the time.**

God allows Satan to test us so that we will humbly draw near to Him in prayer and study of His Word, the Christian Bible.

**1 Peter 5:6-11** [New King James] *“Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.”*

The Eternal God is actually using Satan and his demons to cause us to draw near to Him and in so doing fulfil His desire to take on His “likeness” [character, Hebrew word “demûwth” meaning attributes or “fruits” – **Galatians 5:22-25** which lists all the character of the Eternal Creator God.]

**“Deliver us from the evil one”** – referring to Satan. We have a part to play in this deliverance.

**James 4:7-8** [New King James] *“Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.”*

“Double-minded” is Greek word “dipsuchōs” which means two-spirited, referring to our being influenced by the spirit of Satan as well as the Holy Spirit.

We need to constantly be aware of Satan’s influence in society and avoid all places and situations where he is ruling human beings directly or through his servants, [**2 Corinthians 11:14-15**] both physical and spiritual.

Jesus Christ tells the apostle John how we can overcome the influence of Satan.

**Revelation 12:9, 11-12** [New King James] *“So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” ... “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and you who dwell in them! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and the sea! For the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, because he knows that he has a short time.”*

Two things we can use to overcome the influence of Satan; preaching to all who will listen to the good news of what God has done for all humanity through Jesus Christ, and be a living example of a true Christian to all whom we have contact with on a day-to-day basis, [**Matthew 6:14-16**].

The rewards that all seven churches referred to in Revelation depended on them “*overcoming*,” [Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; Revelation 3:5, 12, 21].

**Matthew 6:13** [New King James] “*for Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory.*”

Any prayer we make to our Eternal Creator God must start with praise, [verse 9] and end with praise, [verse 13]. This will remind us to whom we are speaking, who holds in His hands the future of all humanity.

**“Amen” – is a word direct from the Hebrew meaning, Jehovah, is faithful.**

In **Isaiah 65:16** it is literally rendered “*God of the Amen.*”

If the Eternal God is faithful, [amen] then all His testimonies and precepts are sure, [Psalms 19:7; Psalms 111:7] as are all His warnings, [Hosea 5:9].

**Revelation 3:14** [King James] “*And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;*”

**Amen is the title given to Jesus Christ.**

The prime root of the Hebrew word Amen is “*âman*” meaning to build up or support, to foster as a parent, to be firm and faithful, trustworthy and permanent, true and certain, established.

That is the character of the God we worship, all part of the supreme love that He is, [1 John 4:8, 16].

**Matthew 6:16-18** [New King James] “*Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*”

In Jewish culture, fasting was a deliberate attempt to draw the attention of the Eternal God to the person fasting.

**Jesus Christ was exposing the misuse of fasting, seeking to draw attention of people to the one fasting.**

**True fasting was something done in private without other people being aware that we are fasting.**

Jesus Christ said that His disciples would fast in the future after He had returned to God the Father, [Matthew 9:14-15] when He was not there physically to help His disciples make important decisions, [Acts 13:2].

**Matthew 6:19-21** [New King James] “*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*”

Any valuable physical items we have we are only stewards of them for a short period of time, then others will have them to use wisely or unwisely, [Ecclesiastes 2:18-26].

The treasure we lay up in heaven is accomplished by all acts of obedience to the Eternal Creator God, and loving acts to other human beings who are in need. Such “*treasure*” cannot rust or be stolen.

The added bonus is that it will focus our mind on things that are eternal.

**Matthew 6:22** [King James] *“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.”*

The “light” of the body is the “human” spirit that makes us human **not** animal. It is this spirit that allows the Creator God to examine our real thoughts and motives.

**Proverbs 20:27** [New King James] *“The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all the inner depths of his heart.”*

This is the spirit that Job refers to that gives a human intellect, the ability to make decisions in life, [**Job 32:8**].

**1 Corinthians 2:11** [New King James] *“For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.”*

**It is only when the Holy Spirit is working through this “human” spirit that we can understand the will of the Eternal God, [John 16:13].**

**Without this “human” spirit a human being will revert to being an animal, [Daniel 4:24-37].**

**Ecclesiastes 12:6-7** [New King James] *“Remember your Creator before the silver cord is loosed, or the golden bowl is broken, or the pitcher shattered at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the well. Then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.”*

At death this “human” spirit returns to God who gave it, [**Zechariah 12:1**].

**Acts 7:59** [New King James] *“And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’”*

Stephen knew this fact, and used it as part of his witness to those who were murdering him, including Saul, [**Acts 8:1**] who became the apostle Paul.

This “human” spirit is retained by God until it is placed in a new spiritual body, [**1 Corinthians 15:35, 50-53**] or to a resurrected physical body for all who have never known Jesus Christ and God’s Word, the Christian Bible, [**Revelation 20:11-13**].

For this “human” spirit needs a body, spiritual or physical, to exist in, [**James 2:26**].

Until the above happens to all who die know nothing that is happening on earth, [**Ecclesiastes 9:5-6; Psalms 6:5; Psalms 146:3-4**].

**Matthew 6:22** [King James] *“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.”*

The Greek word translated “single” is “haplōus” and used in the moral sense, a singleness of purpose that keeps us having a “double” treasure, physical as well as spiritual.

**Matthew 6:23** [King James] *“But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”*

The Greek word translated “evil” is “pōnērōs” that which causes pain and sorrow in others and is morally worthless in character to the point of being vicious.

**2 Corinthians 4:3-6** [New King James] *“But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake. For it is the*

*God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”*

The total darkness of a person who has been made blind to the gospel message brought by Jesus Christ the “*light of the world,*” [John 8:12] from God the Father.

**Matthew 6:24** [New King James] *“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”*

The Greek word translated serve is “*dōulēuō*” meaning a slave, subserviency to God or mammon, that is greedy gain of physical things or power over others.

All of the apostles introduced themselves as slaves of Jesus Christ using the word “*dōulōs*” meaning a bond slave who had been purchased by the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ, [Acts 20:28]. **Romans 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1; Revelation 1:1.**

**1 Corinthians 6:19-20** [New King James] *“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

**It is only when we are subject to the Holy Spirit, following His lead, that the “fruits” of the Holy Spirit can become ours; that is the very character of the Triune God.**

**Galatians 5:22-25** [New King James] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”*

This is the “*likeness*” [Hebrew word “*demûwth*” meaning attributes or character] of **Genesis 1:26-27** is formed in us.

The reason that God created human beings and gave us a few years of human existence with the capacity to choose and change.

[Please download and study the article on this website with the title ‘*God’s Purpose For Every Human Being*’ listed under heading ‘*Human Nature.*’ You will be eternally grateful that you did.]