

Day One – Recap of Matthew 6:1-18

We live in a time period that many people characterize as *postmodern*. The term can mean a lot of different things depending on who you ask, but it always means that our culture today is a reaction to certain tendencies of the past, a time known as (you guessed it!) the *modern* period. Things in the modern period made sense, and you could put everything together in a big cohesive picture. Truth was truth, and all you had to do to get it was work hard enough.

Folks who have been impacted by the current cultural norms think differently than people who learned to think under different circumstances. We can see this even within our own church. Younger people (myself included) think differently about the world than older people. One important area where postmodern thought and modern thought tend to differ is the emphasis on *sincerity*.

Sincerity has always been an important virtue, but among many younger people it is considered the *chief* virtue. It doesn't really matter what you believe, as long as you believe it sincerely, according to many today. This blind devotion to sincerity, regardless of truth, is obviously hogwash. My generation has gone to extremes in this area and simply cares too much about being "real."

Having said all that, reading Matthew 6:1-18 makes me think that my generation got something right, too. Jesus cares about truth and theological precision no doubt, but he also seems to care about our motivation for doing the things we do. It's not enough to fast or give to the poor; according to Jesus, it's also important *why* you do these things. As we have previously discussed, the Sermon on the Mount concerns itself with both external *and* internal standards. Who a person is and what a person does must be in agreement.

In what areas do you struggle with religious hypocrisy? (If you can't think of anything, just ask someone who knows you well.)

What do you think is the root of religious hypocrisy?

Day Two – Read 6:5-15

Compare the wrong way to pray vs. 5-8 and the right way to pray vs. 9-13.

Which category do you think most of the prayers you hear, or pray personally, should be placed? Explain.

Day Three Read 6:9-13

What name has been given to this prayer?

Did Jesus say this is *what* the disciples/we should pray or *how* the disciples/we should pray?

After the initial address to God as Father, what are the six petitions?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Day Four – Read 6:9-13

What is the significance of the initial address to God as Father?

If you divided the six petitions into two groups, the first three are directed to _____.

The last three are directed toward _____.

Do most of our prayers start with the worship of God and our personal, deliberate dedication to Him? If not, do you think that we should make a conscious effort to pray in this way?

Briefly explain each petition.

- 1.
- 2.

- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Day Five – Read 6:9-15

Challenge: What do you think Jesus is telling the disciples in verses 14-15?

How would you explain these verses to someone?

Are these verses applicable to us?

Day Six

If you are looking to go a little bit deeper in your understanding of the text for this week, try one of these resources:

<http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/index.php?action=getBookSections&cid=1&source=1>

<http://www.evangelibrary.org.uk/members/com/nt/jcr/mt/mat-Index.html>

Sermons Transcripts:

Ligon Duncan - http://www.fpcjackson.org/resources/sermons/matthew/matthew_vol_1-2/matthew_vol_1-2/index_Matthew_vol_1-2.html

Audio:

John Piper - <http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Sermons/ByScripture/14/>

S. Lewis Johnson - http://sljinstitute.net/sermons/new%20testament/gospels/matthew/matthew_master.html