

## Matthew 6:7-13

### Introduction

- A. Verse 1 – \_\_\_\_\_ statement for the next 17 verses.
1. When Jesus says “practicing your righteousness” He’s talking about \_\_\_\_\_.
    - a. Matthew 6:1 (NRSV) – Beware of *practicing* your piety before others.
    - b. Matthew 6:1 (GNB) – Make certain you do not *perform* your religious *duties* in public.
    - c. Think of set \_\_\_\_\_.
  2. Our Christianity \_\_\_\_\_ religion.
  3. Our religion will turn into legalism only when we start to think that our religion \_\_\_\_\_ something from God!
- B. Verses 2-6, 16-18 – Three \_\_\_\_\_ illustrating how to apply verse 1 in our religious duties.
1. “And when you give alms...” (2-4)
  2. “And when you pray...” (5-6)
  3. “And when you fast...” (16-18)
- C. Verses 7-15 – “Extra” teaching on prayer (“And when you pray...” – v.7).
1. Almsgiving, *Prayer*, and Fasting really aren’t the \_\_\_\_\_ points. They’re just “incidental” ways to *illustrate* the main point in verse 1.
  2. But in verses 7-15, prayer suddenly takes center stage as the main topic of instruction.
  3. This is more “evidence” that \_\_\_\_\_ of these “incidental” illustrations are really giving us a window into the kind of *religion* that’s appropriate and becoming to all of us as disciples of Jesus.
  4. When Jesus “interrupts” Himself...

### I. Verse 7

- A. Notice what is *not* the problem with the prayers of the Gentiles:
1. The Gentiles believe in the possibility of \_\_\_\_\_ prayer.
  2. The Gentiles believe in the \_\_\_\_\_ existence of a powerful god.
  1. The Gentiles are quite in \_\_\_\_\_ about their prayers!
- B. What *is* the problem with the prayers of the Gentiles.
1. The Gentiles believed they had to \_\_\_\_\_ to *try and* \_\_\_\_\_ *the deity* to hear them and answer them.

2. “God” becomes a sort of magic \_\_\_\_\_ that has to be carefully manipulated.
3. The Gentiles had no real sense of \_\_\_\_\_ dependence upon God.

## II. Verse 8

- A. When Jesus speaks of the one to whom we pray as our *Father*, He’s saying that God is *already* \_\_\_\_\_ to meet all the needs of His children.
  1. Matthew 7:9-11 – Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more* will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!
  2. **God** is \_\_\_\_\_ the reluctant deity of the Gentiles!
  3. Therefore, we are *not* to try relating to God as we would to a genie (intent simply on getting our wishes).
  
- B. “Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.”
  1. \_\_\_\_\_ does God want us to ask – if He is *already willing* to meet all of our needs *and* if He *already* \_\_\_\_\_ all of our needs?
  2. The point of praying is not *ultimately* getting what we \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. The point of praying is **ultimately** that of living in a \_\_\_\_\_, humbly \_\_\_\_\_ relationship with our Father God!

## Conclusion

- A. When Jesus says, “Don’t be like the Gentiles”, He assumes that we \_\_\_\_\_ be, and often \_\_\_\_\_ like the Gentiles.
  
- B. The main problem is \_\_\_\_\_ that we need to be convinced that God hears and will answer our prayers.
  1. The main problem is that we have chosen to relate to God as the \_\_\_\_\_ relate to their gods.
  2. We are too \_\_\_\_\_-sufficient, too intent on the “\_\_\_\_\_” of getting our needs met, so that we have no time for living in a true relationship of \_\_\_\_\_, and simple, humble \_\_\_\_\_ upon our Father God.
  3. Verses 9-13 – “Pray then [not like the Gentiles, but] like this”...

C. Why do we need to pray?

D. Why do we need to pray *together* as a \_\_\_\_\_?

### **Teaching our Children**

Q. How did Jesus say the Gentiles prayed?

A. They heaped up empty phrases and used lots of words.

Q. Why did the Gentiles heap up so many empty phrases and use so many words?

A. The Gentiles believed that if they did these things, their gods would hear them and be willing to answer their prayers.

(DISCUSS with your children the points under I. B. 1.&2.)

Q. Were the Gentiles humbly trusting and depending upon their “gods”?

A. No. The Gentiles just wanted to do what they had to do, to get their needs met.

Q. If God is our **Father** (Mat. 6:8), then how do you think He feels about meeting our needs?

A. God is *already* 100% willing to meet all of our needs!

(See Matthew 7:9-11 [II. A. 1.] and discuss how very different this is from the pagan’s idea of God!)

Q. Not only is God willing to meet all of our needs, but Jesus says that even before we ask Him God already what?

A. God already knows what we need even before we ask Him.

Q. **Why** does God want us to pray (ask) – if He is *already willing* to meet all of our needs *and* if He *already knows* all of our needs?

A. God wants us to remember to trust Him and humbly depend upon Him. This is the main point of prayer.

(So the main point of prayer is not getting what we need). Contrast with the Gentiles!

Q. When we don’t pray or when we pray like the Gentiles (trying to “get” God to give us what we need), we show that we are not what?

A. We are not trusting in God. We are really trying to make it on our own.

Q. When we pray to our Father, knowing that He already knows what we need and that He is already willing to give us what we need, what does our prayer say?

A. I need You. I’m trusting in You. I’m depending upon You.

This is the kind of prayer that pleases God.