

Matthew 6 Explained

25 Lessons from Jesus on Prayer, Priorities, and Trust

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." - *Matthew 6:33 (KJV)*



Introduction

Matthew 6 is one of those chapters that reads like Jesus walking straight into the **hidden rooms of the human heart**. He talks about giving, prayer, fasting, money, worry, motives, trust, and what truly matters. It is not just about religious actions - it is about **why we do what we do**. Jesus exposes the temptation to perform for people while calling us into a real, secret life with the Father.

If we are honest, this chapter steps on our toes in the best possible way. Have you ever done something good and quietly hoped someone noticed? Have you prayed but found your mind repeating words while your heart was somewhere else? Matthew 6 does not just teach doctrine - it **confronts everyday life**.

- 📖 Jesus keeps bringing us back to one central truth: **your Father sees, knows, cares, and provides**. That changes everything. Prayer becomes personal. Giving becomes worship. Worry loses its grip.

Give in Secret, and the Father Sees What Men Cannot

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." - *Matthew 6:1*

Big Idea

God cares not only about **what** we do, but **why** we do it. Motive changes everything - two people can give the same amount, and heaven may read those gifts very differently.

How to Apply This

- Ask before giving: "If nobody ever knew I did this, would I still do it?"
- Practice **hidden generosity** - give where only God gets the glory
- Let generosity become a private conversation between you and the Father

3 Verses That Confirm This

1 Samuel 16:7 - "The Lord looketh on the heart."

Proverbs 21:2 - "The Lord pondereth the hearts."

Colossians 3:23-24 - "Do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."

3 Contrasts

Applause vs
Worship

People vs God

Temporary vs Eternal

Do Not Pray to Be Seen by Men

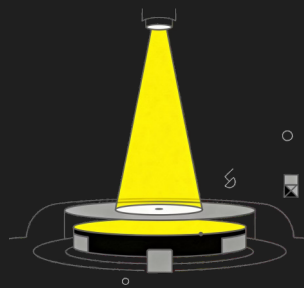
"And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are..." - *Matthew 6:5*

Prayer is communion with God, not spiritual theater. Prayer can become performance if we are not careful. Jesus was not condemning public prayer - He Himself prayed publicly. The issue was praying with the goal of being **admired**. Hypocrisy in Scripture is wearing a mask - acting spiritual instead of being spiritual. Prayer was never meant to be a religious stage performance. God wants **truth, not acting**.



Communion

Talking honestly with God, not performing for the room.



Performance

Praying to impress listeners - it reaches the room but not heaven.



Sincerity

Choosing authenticity over sounding impressive before others.

Pray to the Father in Secret

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet..." - *Matthew 6:6*

Private prayer builds real relationship with God. Jesus points us to secret prayer because relationships grow in private spaces. A marriage built only on public appearances would be hollow - same with faith. Secret prayer is where **honesty lives**. That is where tears fall. Where fear gets named. Where repentance becomes real. Where gratitude becomes personal.

The "closet" is not about architecture. It is about **intentional privacy with God**. Your Father is not distant - He is inviting.

Create a daily
prayer space

Turn off
distractions

Talk plainly
with God

Be consistent
even when
emotions are
flat

Do Not Use Vain Repetitions in Prayer

"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions..." - *Matthew 6:7*

Theology in Plain English

Jesus is not forbidding **repeated prayer** - He Himself repeated prayer in Gethsemane. The problem is **empty repetition**. Mindless recitation. Thinking word count equals spiritual power. Prayer is not a vending machine where saying the right phrase enough times produces results.

God is not manipulated by formulas. He listens to **faith, sincerity, and truth**. A short honest prayer can be more real than a thousand empty words.

3 Verses That Confirm This

1 Kings 18:26 - Baal's prophets repeated endlessly with no response.

Romans 8:26 - The Spirit helps our infirmities in prayer.

Hebrews 4:16 - Come boldly to the throne of grace.

Apply This

- Pray **thoughtfully** - slow down and mean what you say
- Avoid treating prayer like a script you rush through
- Choose **conversation** over ritual speech

Your Father Knows What You Need Before You Ask

"For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of..." - *Matthew 6:8*

Prayer informs our hearts, not God's awareness. You are never explaining your situation to an uninformed God - He already knows. So why pray? Because **prayer is relationship**. Prayer aligns us. Prayer expresses dependence. Prayer keeps us close to the Provider instead of just obsessed with provision.



Relationship

Prayer deepens our connection with God - not just our request list.



Confidence

God knowing your need doesn't remove prayer - it gives prayer confidence.



Dependence

Pray with **trust, not panic**. Rest in God's full awareness of your situation.

Pray for God's Name to Be Hallowed

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." - *Matthew 6:9*

Prayer begins with God's holiness, not our shopping list. Jesus teaches **reverence first** - not because God is cold, but because God is worthy. Prayer starts by remembering who we are speaking to. He is Father, but He is also **holy**. Familiarity should never become casual disrespect. Worship resets perspective before requests begin.

Begin prayer with worship

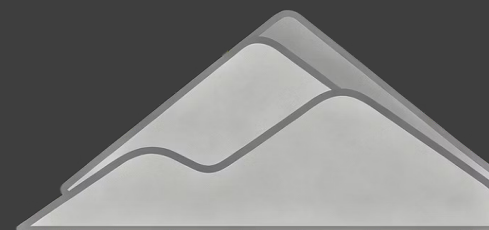
Thank God for His character before bringing any request.

Approach with reverence and confidence

Both are possible because He is both holy and Father.

God-centered prayer, not self-centered prayer

Worship first reorients the entire conversation.



Pray for God's Kingdom to Come and His Will to Be Done

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done..." - *Matthew 6:10*

Big Idea

Prayer is surrender before it is petition. We love prayer when it feels like asking God to support our plans. Jesus teaches something bigger - prayer is aligning ourselves with **God's rule**. His kingdom. His will. That can be hard because sometimes our will is very loud.

But kingdom prayer says, "**Lord, shape me.**"

3 Verses That Confirm This

Luke 22:42 - "Not my will, but thine, be done."

Romans 12:2 - Proving God's perfect will.

Psalms 40:8 - "I delight to do thy will."

Apply This

- Surrender plans in prayer
- Ask God to **redirect your desires**
- Pray for His rule in your home, thoughts, and decisions

Ask God for Daily Provision

"Give us this day our daily bread." - *Matthew 6:11*

Dependence on God is meant to be daily - not monthly independence. Daily bread reminds us we live by God's provision. It humbles pride. It kills self-sufficiency. It builds trust one day at a time.

Exodus 16:4

God gave daily manna - never a year's supply all at once. Dependence was the design.

Philippians 4:19

"My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory."

Psalms 37:25

"Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."



Forgive Others as Part of Your Walk with God

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." - *Matthew 6:12*

A forgiven heart should become a forgiving heart. Jesus does not treat forgiveness like an optional personality trait. We all love receiving mercy - we are slower when it comes to giving it. An unforgiving heart says, "**I want grace for me, but judgment for them.**" That is a dangerous place to live.

❗ Forgiveness does not mean pretending evil never happened. It does not mean trust is instantly restored. It means **releasing personal vengeance into God's hands**. Sometimes forgiveness is not one emotional moment - sometimes it is a repeated surrender.

Ask God to
reveal hidden
bitterness

Pray for those
who hurt you

Refuse to
rehearse
offenses

Release the
right to settle
the score

Ask for Deliverance from Temptation and Evil

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil..." - *Matthew 6:13*

Theology in Plain English

Jesus teaches us to pray like people who know **spiritual battles are real**. There is a real enemy, real pressure, real fleshly weakness, and real need for God's help. This prayer is not saying God personally lures us into sin - James makes clear God does not tempt anyone with evil. The heart of this prayer is **dependence**.

"Lord, keep me. Lord, strengthen me. Lord, help me see the trap before I step into it." Some temptations announce themselves. Others show up dressed like harmless compromise. **Victory is not self-confidence - victory is dependence.**

Apply This

- Pray **before** temptation, not only after failure
- Learn your weak spots honestly
- Avoid environments that repeatedly pull you down
- Use **Scripture actively** when tempted
- Ask God daily for **spiritual alertness**

3 Key Contrasts

- Dependence vs self-confidence
- Spiritual alertness vs careless drifting
- Victory through God vs repeated avoidable defeat

Do Not Worry About Food, Drink, or Clothing

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink..." -
Matthew 6:25

Jesus says "therefore," which connects directly to the issue of **divided masters**. If money is your master, worry will usually be your roommate. Jesus is not saying food and clothing do not matter - He is saying **life is bigger than those things**. Worry shrinks life. It makes immediate needs feel ultimate. It keeps the mind spinning in circles that solve nothing.

And if we are honest, worry can feel weirdly productive - like if we think about the problem long enough, somehow that counts as progress. It usually does not. **Your soul was not made to be chained to constant anxiety about provision.**

→ **Catch worry early**

Interrupt anxious thoughts before they spiral.

→ **Turn anxiety into prayer**

Make specific requests instead of spinning in your mind.

→ **Refuse material definitions**

Don't let earthly concerns define your emotional state.

The Father Feeds the Birds, and You Are of Greater Value

"Behold the fowls of the air... are ye not much better than they?" - *Matthew 6:26*

Big Idea

Jesus points to birds - not theologians, not economists. **Creation itself teaches trust.** Birds do not own storage units full of emergency reserves, yet God sustains them. They move, search, and gather, but they are not consumed by **anxious striving**.

Jesus makes the comparison clear: "**How much more.**" You are not a forgotten life form drifting through the universe. The Father knows you. Values you. Cares for you. The cross already settled how serious His love is.



3 Verses That Confirm This

Psalms 147:9 - "He giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry."

Luke 12:24 - Jesus repeats the same teaching.

Romans 8:32 - "He that spared not his own Son..."

Worry Cannot Add to Your Stature

"Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?" - *Matthew 6:27*

Worry consumes energy without producing control. Jesus asks a question with an obvious answer - nobody worries themselves taller. Nobody anxiously thinks themselves into control. Worry loves pretending it is useful. It says, "If you keep obsessing, maybe you can prevent disaster." But worry often just **drains the strength needed for actual obedience.**

⚠ This is not a condemnation for struggling people - it is a **loving reality check**. Worry promises control it cannot deliver. It burns emotional fuel while leaving the engine in park. Planning can be wise. Responsibility is biblical. But **worry is restless trust in self** instead of peaceful trust in God.

Ask: Is this productive planning or anxious looping?

Release what you cannot control

Act where obedience is clear

Leave outcomes with God

Consider How God Clothes the Lilies

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow..." - *Matthew 6:28-30*

Jesus shifts from birds to flowers. Again, **creation becomes the classroom**. Lilies do not manufacture their own beauty through frantic stress, yet God clothes them with splendor. Jesus says even **Solomon in all his glory** was not arrayed like one of these. The point is not botany - the point is trust.

If God lavishes care on temporary flowers, what does that say about His care for His people? Jesus also gently exposes **"little faith"** - not to shame, but to correct perspective. Worry often grows where trust has grown thin. Creation reminds us the Father is **attentive**.

Slow down enough to notice

Let creation remind you of God's faithful character.

Challenge fearful assumptions

Replace them with the truth of what God's care looks like.

Strengthen faith through remembrance

God has provided before - He will again.

Do Not Live Like Those Who Anxiously Chase Material Needs

"For after all these things do the Gentiles seek..." - *Matthew 6:31-32*

Theology in Plain English

Jesus draws a sharp contrast between **kingdom people** and those who do not know the Father. The world chases, runs, scrambles, panics, and measures life by material security. Jesus says that should not define God's people. Why? Because "**your heavenly Father knoweth.**"

If you believe you are spiritually orphaned, panic makes sense. If you know you have a Father, **trust becomes possible**. This does not mean believers never feel anxiety - it means anxiety should not become our **worldview**.

3 Verses That Confirm This

Romans 12:2 - "Be not conformed to this world..."

Philippians 3:20 - "Our conversation is in heaven."

Psalms 23:1 - "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

3 Contrasts

- Kingdom trust vs worldly panic
- Father-centered security vs orphan thinking
- Faith-driven living vs fear-driven chasing

Your Heavenly Father Knows Your Needs

"For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." - *Matthew 6:32*

Jesus repeats this truth because we need repetition where **anxiety likes to camp**. Your Father knows - not guesses, not discovers later. **Knows**. That matters because worry often whispers, "Maybe God does not see this." Maybe the bill. Maybe the pressure. Maybe the family strain. Maybe the uncertainty. Jesus answers that lie directly: **He knows**.

- ✔ This does not mean every desire gets fulfilled exactly how we picture it - needs and wants are not always identical twins. But **the Father is not inattentive. He is not absent. He is not overwhelmed by your situation**. A child rests differently when they trust the parent sees the problem. That is what Jesus is building here.

01

When anxiety rises,
answer it with truth

Say what Jesus said: "My Father knows."

02

Separate true needs from
anxious wants

Discernment brings clarity and peace.

03

Pray from trust, not
desperation

Approach the throne as a child,
not a stranger.

Seek First the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness..." - *Matthew 6:33*

This is the **turning point of Matthew 6**. Jesus has been dismantling false priorities one by one - performance, religious image, material obsession, worry, divided loyalties. Then comes the positive command: **Seek first**. Not eventually. Not when life settles down. Not after every earthly concern feels solved. **First**.

That word exposes a lot - because whatever consistently gets first place is effectively **functioning as lord in practice**. Kingdom people do not drift into kingdom priorities by accident. "Seek" is active. Intentional. Pursued. Desired. Ordered.

Audit your real priorities

Start the day with God before noise

Decide through kingdom values

Ask: "What is getting first place right now?"

Needed Things Are Added When God's Kingdom Comes First

"...and all these things shall be added unto you." - *Matthew 6:33*

Theology in Plain English

This verse gets misused sometimes. Jesus is not pitching a **spiritual formula for luxury**. This is not "put God first and become instantly rich." The context is provision for genuine needs - food, clothing, life necessities. Jesus teaches that **anxious pursuit is not the path; trusting kingdom order is**.

God's provision may not always look like your imagined timeline or preferred packaging - but Jesus says the Father cares for His people.

Provision is the Father's department.

Priority is ours.

3 Verses That Confirm This

Psalms 34:10 - "They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing."

Luke 12:31 - "Seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you."

2 Corinthians 9:8 - "God is able to make all grace abound toward you."

3 Contrasts

- Trusting provision vs chasing provision
- Kingdom obedience vs material obsession
- Faithful dependence vs manipulative religion

Do Not Borrow Tomorrow's Worries

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow..." - *Matthew 6:34*

This hits home because so much worry lives in **imagined futures**. "What if this happens?" "What if that falls apart?" "What if next month goes badly?" Jesus pulls us back - **tomorrow is not today's assignment**. That does not mean wise planning is wrong. It means **anxious pre-suffering is unnecessary**.

A lot of emotional exhaustion comes from mentally living in fictional future disasters. Some never happen. Some happen differently. And if hard days do come, **God's grace meets us there** - not in imaginary rehearsals. Borrowing tomorrow's trouble usually comes with brutal emotional interest rates.

1

Recognize the pattern

Notice when your anxiety is living in imagined futures, not present realities.

2

Stay grounded today

Focus on today's clear responsibilities and obediences.

3

Plan wisely without panic

Preparation and anxiety are very different things.

4

Trust tomorrow to God

His faithfulness extends to every morning you have not yet seen.

Each Day Has Enough Trouble of Its Own

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." - *Matthew 6:34*

Jesus is **realistic**. He does not pretend life is trouble-free. He does not say, "Relax, nothing difficult will happen." He says today already has enough. That is **strangely comforting** because it is honest. Following God is not denial - it is trust in reality. Life has real pressures, real grief, real decisions, real burdens.

But piling tomorrow's hypothetical problems onto today's real ones **crushes the heart unnecessarily**. God gives daily grace, daily strength, daily help - not a lifetime emotional supply dump all at once. **Daily bread. Daily grace. Daily dependence.** That pattern shows up all through Scripture.



Face Today Faithfully

Stop carrying theoretical future burdens that belong to God.



Receive Daily Grace

God's grace comes one day at a time - receive it that way.



Return to Prayer

When anxiety expands beyond today, return to the Father in prayer.

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be." - *Deuteronomy 33:25*