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Sincere Prayer

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Hillsboro, MO

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Repenting of Denominational Prejudice, Addressing False Doctrine

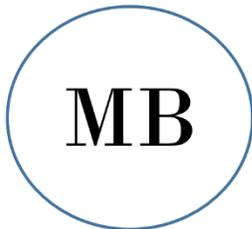
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Sincere Prayer

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Matthew 6

Read the following passage slowly and contemplatively, pay attention to the text—let the Holy Spirit speak to your heart as you read the Scripture, or you're likely to miss the message.

1 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. **2** Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. **3** But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: **4** That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

Prayer

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.

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. **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. **8** Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. **9** After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. **10** Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread. **12** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. **13** And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: **15** But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Fasting

16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. **17** But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; **18** That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Where Is Your Treasure?

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: **20** But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: **21** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. **22** The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. **23** 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! **24** No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Don't Be Concerned About Worldly Things

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? **26** Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? **27** Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? **28** And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: **29** And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. **30** Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he* not much more *clothe* you, O ye of little faith? **31** Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat?

or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? **32** (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. **33** But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. **34** Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

Matt 6:1-34

Sincere Prayer

It all began with a message that I shared when I was asked to fill in for a Sunday School teacher at my church: *sincere prayer*. The Bible does not talk about praying every day for this or that or about how long to pray. Yes it does say to pray without ceasing (which is a lifestyle of prayer). But Jesus teaches in the parables that memorized, repetitious prayers are worthless, whereas a sincere, short prayer is incredibly meaningful.

I have come to the conviction that prayer is not about praying for an hour or half hour—that is not what makes it powerful. What is powerful is a lifestyle with Christ as its centerpiece: Savior *and* LORD.

Praying without ceasing is about praying on all occasions with all manners of prayer.

I do not believe in the context of Matthew 6, that the Lord's prayer is meant to be recited. We are not heard because of prayers that we repeat in an effort to be heard by God. **We are heard because we have a gracious Savior who is the High Priest of the Redeemed (Hebrews 4-8).** That doesn't mean that we are not to be persistent in our prayers. But God desires sincere, heart-felt prayers, just like you would talk to your best friend who is really listening and values your presence. Sin will build a barrier between us and God (Psalm 59:2; 66:18; James 4) but it is the sincere prayer of confession that tears down that wall and reopens the communication lines to Heaven (1 John 1:9; Ps 51:17; Luke 18:13).

David cried out to God and asked Him why his life was spinning out of control and his enemies were winning!—that's a sincere prayer! We should have a fear of God (being able to tremble before the holy and sovereign King of the heavens and the earth) and not be hasty to utter whatever our list of lusts is, but we should also enter His courts. And we should enter His courts with praise and thankfulness (1 Thess 5:18; Ps 100:4).

I personally struggle with praying a long time, but every really balanced time in my walk that I can remember had this component in the mix: I

prayed often, but short prayers. I sincerely went to God and cried out to Him. And He answered. Not because I scheduled them or made a list of what to pray for—tried that many times and it has always failed, but because I was **dependent** on the Lord and **thankful** for His Hand of protection and provision in my life.

Prayer was meant to be a conversation (you naturally talk to who you know and love) not a mere ritual or many words that causes God to hear.

It is not about how long you pray—a lot of books on prayer have left me feeling condemned and discouraged—because I am not praying their particular list/method/time frame. Maybe you have had the same experience.

I believe in the Bible and believe that prayer is powerful and Biblical—but where does it say, pray this or that every day or for a certain amount of time? It does not that I can find. There are things the Bible says to pray for, but why do we think that a powerful prayer is one that we pray every day repetitiously? That's simply not true. Jesus meant for prayer to be something much different than we usually have in our minds that it's supposed to be in America today.

Scriptural Examples of Sincere Prayers

David

How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?

How long will You hide Your face from me?

² How long shall I take counsel in my soul,

Having sorrow in my heart daily?

How long will my enemy be exalted over me?

³ Consider *and* hear me, O LORD my God;

Enlighten my eyes,

Lest I sleep the *sleep of* death;

⁴ Lest my enemy say,

“I have prevailed against him”;

Lest those who trouble me rejoice when I am moved.

⁵ But I have trusted in Your mercy;

My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation.

⁶ I will sing to the LORD,

Because He has dealt bountifully with me.

Psalms 13 NKJV

Solomon obtains wisdom, riches, and honor because of what he asked God sincerely for

5 In Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee. **6** And Solomon said, Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as *it is* this day. **7** And now, O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I *am but* a little child: I know not *how* to go out or come in. **8** And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. **9** Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? **10** And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. **11** And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself, nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; **12** Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. **13** And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days.

14 And if thou wilt walk in my ways, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as thy father David did walk, then I will lengthen thy days.

15 And Solomon awoke; and, behold, *it was* a dream. And he came to Jerusalem, and stood before the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and offered up burnt offerings, and offered peace offerings, and made a feast to all his servants.

Solomon Proves His Wisdom

16 Then came there two women, *that were* harlots, unto the king, and stood before him. **17** And the one woman said, O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house.

18 And it came to pass the third day after that I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also: and we *were* together; *there was* no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house. **19** And this woman's child died in the night; because she overlaid it. **20** And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. **21** And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear.

22 And the other woman said, Nay; but the living *is* my son, and the dead *is* thy son. And this said, No; but the dead *is* thy son, and the living *is* my son. Thus they spake before the king. **23** Then said the king, The one saith, This *is* my son that liveth, and thy son *is* the dead: and the other saith, Nay; but thy son *is* the dead, and my son *is* the living. **24** And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. **25** And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. **26** Then spake the woman whose the living child *was* unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, *but divide it*. **27** Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she *is* the mother thereof. **28** And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God *was* in him, to do judgment.

Samson

28 And Samson called unto the LORD, and said, O Lord GOD, remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

Judges 16:28

Jesus—“not My will, but Yours be done”

39 And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. **40** And when he was at the place, he said unto them, **Pray that ye enter not into temptation.** **41** And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, **42** Saying, **Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.** **43** And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. **44** And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. **45** And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, **46** And said unto them, **Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.**

Luke 22:39-46

Scriptures to Meditate On

7 Casting all your care (anxieties) upon him; for he careth for you.

1 Peter 5:7

22 Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

Psalms 55:21-22

Thou wilt keep *him* in perfect peace, *whose* mind is stayed on *thee*: because he trusteth in thee.

Isaiah 26:3

Some other passages to read to begin further study on your own

Hezekiah (2 Kings 19:1-18,35-37; 20:1-11) Isaiah 38:2-8

About the Author

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