



Sermon on the Mount Series

SECRET RIGHTEOUSNESS

Let Your Light Shine Before Men

Course Text: Matthew 6

The theme of the 6th chapter of the Sermon on the Mount is public and private prayer and worship. In this course we are going to look at the chapter as a whole. In later courses we will look at various aspects of this chapter in more detail.

Lesson Topic

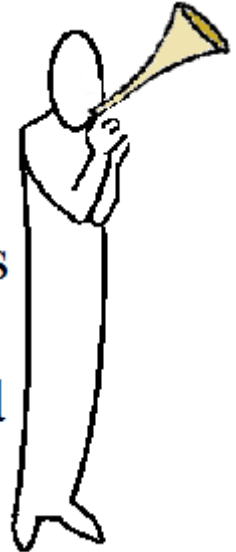
Lesson 1 - Public Righteousness (Matthew 6:1-6)

Lesson 2 - Private Prayer (Matthew 6:7-15)

Lesson 3 - Wealth OR Worship (Matthew 6:19-24)

Lesson 4 - Be Worry Free (Matthew 6:25-34)

Beware of
practicing
your
righteousness
before men
to be noticed
by them.



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Suggested methodology for each course:

1. Allow time for greetings and fellowship (Save most of this for the end of class.)
2. Take prayer requests (Try to keep it from becoming a competition to see who has the most or the worst.)
3. Pray (The idea here is to leave our troubles with God so we can give His word our attention with a clear mind.)
4. Read the text aloud from the Bible one question at a time.
5. Answer and briefly discuss the “fill in the blank” questions. Let those who prefer to listen, listen. My answers on the next page are just one opinion; you may have a better answer. Repeat 4 & 5 for all questions except the *“Think & Pray”* questions.
6. On the final *“Think & Pray”* question everyone should take a few minutes to pray over it and jot down their own thoughts before the discussion. **This gives the Holy Spirit a time to speak, so don't rush it.** The class leader should watch for the pencils and pens to quit moving. Others can look at the “For Further Thought” questions while waiting for everyone to finish.
7. Discuss your *“Think & Pray”* answers. Never force anyone to share theirs. As with the other questions, my answer, when provided, are just one more opinion; you may have a better answer.
8. Close in prayer (It is best to call on others to pray, but try to get their permission ahead of time.)
9. Fellowship (Leave this as open ended as possible for the time and place you meet.)

Depending on the number of people, each lesson is expected to take about one hour. Steps 4 thru 7 are about half of that. If you take longer, let each lesson take more than one meeting, or consider breaking into two groups. If you take less time, extra questions are provided for discussion called “For Further Thought”

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----- ANSWERS -----

Lesson 1 - Public Righteousness (Matthew 6:1-6, Matthew 6:16-18)

[1A] What are we warned against? Being righteous to be noticed by other people. Mt 6:1

[1B] What did some people do while they were giving to the poor? Played music Mt 6:2

[1C] What are we to keep secret from our left hand? What we are doing with our right hand. Mt 6:3

[1D] Who sees what we do in secret? Our Father Mt 6:4, Mt 6:6

[1E] Where did some people pray? Synagogues and street corners Mt 6:5

[1F] Where did Jesus say to pray? Our inner room Mt 6:6

[1G] What are we *not* supposed to do when we fast?

Put on a gloomy face, neglect our personal grooming Mt 6:16

[1H] What are we supposed to do when we fast? anoint our head and wash our face Mt 6:17

[1I] Who should we want to notice our fasting? God, not men Mt 6:18 Fasting does not involve others at all. It is between you and God.

[1J] Praying can involve other people too, if they are doing it with you, but it needs to be directed towards God, not those that are listening. However, if the majority of your prayer life is done in public, there is something seriously wrong. You should be praying in private 20 times as much as in public; maybe 50 times as much.

For further thought:

(1k) How are we to understand Matthew 6:1 when Jesus said, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."? (Matthew 5:16) Is He contradicting Himself? First He says "Let your light shine before men" and then He says, "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men." That is the danger of basing Christianity on a few verses here and there. You have to look at the context. What is the context here? How is it different than chapter 5?

(1l) How can you secretly love the people around you more? Think about where you live, work or play. Suppose you return after an absence. What could somebody have done in your area that would have made you feel like you were loved? What would happen if you secretly did those kinds of things for the people around you in that place? How would the atmosphere of that place change if the people living there felt like there was a secret angel delivering little blessings all the time? I don't know. Maybe it is impossible. All I ask is that you pray about it and think about it.

(1m) Have you ever had experience with fasting? What was it like? If not, why not?

My further thoughts:

(1k) In chapter 5, what were the examples? Avoiding violence, managing your anger, and being gentle and kind with people; avoiding sexual morality by not allowing yourself to think about it, make your marriage work for God's sake, and for the sake of your children; make few promises and keep the ones you make; forgive each other, love your neighbor. These all involve other people. So, we can't do those things secretly. When we do these things right, we need to make sure God gets the glory.

Here in chapter 6, it is different. Here we have three examples; giving, prayer, and fasting; which are to be done in private. Giving surely involves the person being given to, but no one else need know, and sometimes we can even give to them secretly. Some of the people Jesus was preaching to were marching down the street with trumpets playing and announcing how much they were giving. They kidded themselves that they were doing it to be a good example, but they were doing it for self-glory, not God's glory. If you can give something to someone without them knowing who it is, or if you do it through a church or Christian ministry, they have no choice but to give God their thanks. How great is that? It is important for them to know they are receiving from God. It is not important that they know they are receiving from you.

Once again Jesus calls us to do something simple but difficult. If what we are doing right involves others, do it in such a way that God gets the glory. If what you are doing right does not involve others, or involves few others, do it in such a way that God gets the glory, like doing it in secret. How can we do this? It still sounds kind of complicated; doesn't it? It is kind of like the lust and adultery in the last chapter. If we manage the focus of our attention on God the rest of it sort of follows along almost automatically.

Lesson 2 - Private Prayer (Matthew 6:7-15)

Please read Matthew 6:5-15 and answer the following questions:

[2A] Where did some people pray? _____

[2B] Where did Jesus say to pray? _____

[2C] Why do the Gentiles suppose they will be heard? _____

[2D] When does our Father become aware of what we need? _____

[2E] Where is our Father? _____

[2F] Whose will should be done? _____

[2G] How much bread are we to request? _____

[2H] What condition is placed on us for being forgiven? _____

[2I] What do we ask to be delivered from? _____

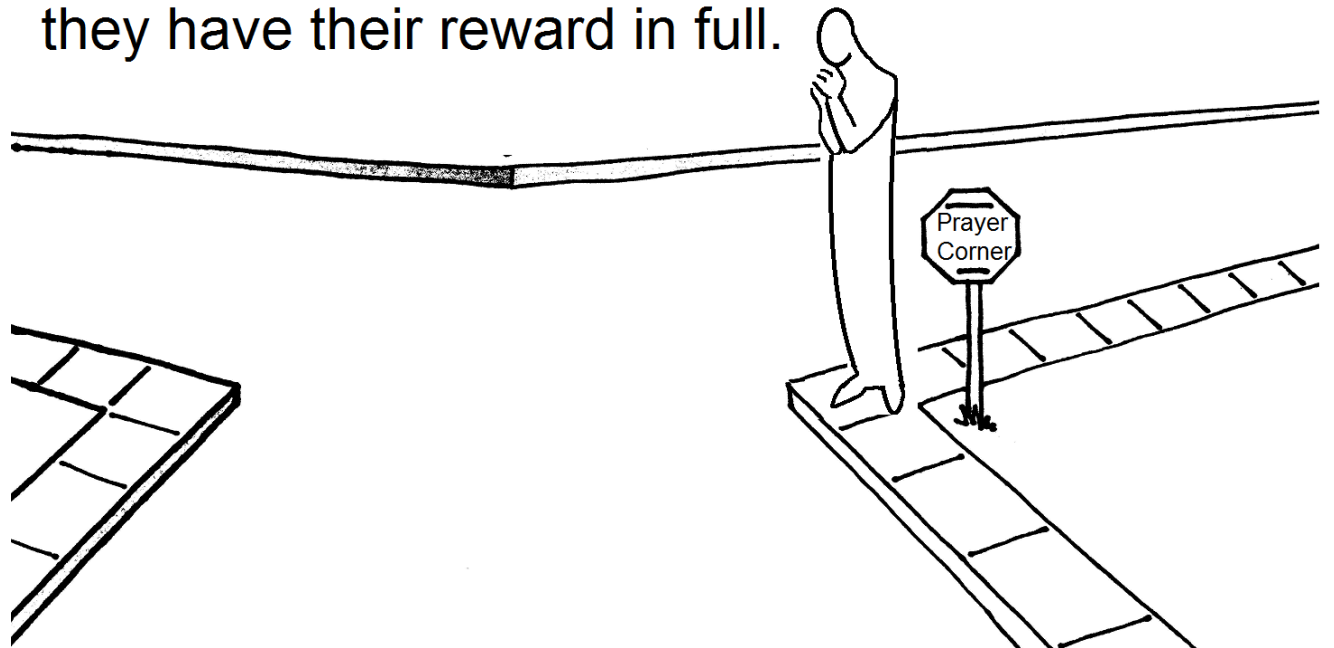
[2J] If God already knows what we need and want, (Matthew 6:8), why pray at all?

(Hints: Ephesians 6:12-13, 18; Luke 11:3-13; James 4:2; Hebrews 4:16; Philippians 4:6-7)

Think and Pray _____



When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.



----- ANSWERS -----

Lesson 2 - Private Prayer (Matthew 6:5-15)

[2A] Where did some people pray? Synagogues and street corners Mt 6:5

[2B] Where did Jesus say to pray? Our inner room Mt 6:6

[2C] Why do the Gentiles suppose they will be heard? Repetition Mt 6:7

[2D] When does our Father become aware of what we need? Before we ask Him Mt 6:8

[2E] Where is our Father? In heaven Mt 6:9

[2F] Whose will should be done? Our Father's will Mt 6:10

[2G] How much bread are we to request? What we need that day Mt 6:11

[2H] What condition is placed on us for being forgiven? That we forgive Mt 6:12, Mt 6:13-14

[2I] What do we ask to be delivered from? Evil and temptation Mt 6:13

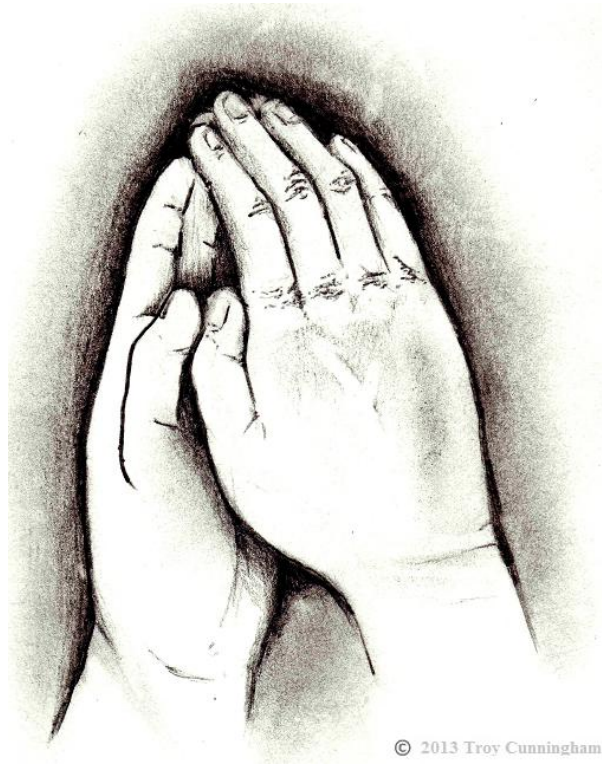
[2J] Why pray at all? Besides the obvious answer that Jesus told us to?

Because there is a devil, and prayer is a God-appointed way to resist Him (Ephesians. 6:12-13, 18).

Because prayer is God's way for us to obtain what we need from Him (Luke 11:3-13; James. 4:2).

Because prayer is the means God chose for us to find "grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:16).

Because prayer with thanksgiving is God's way for us to obtain freedom from anxiety and to receive "the peace of God" (Phil. 4:6-7). (From a sermon by R.A Torrey in the Public Domain)



For further thought:

(2k) Compare Matthew 6:5-13 with Luke 11:1-4. What is the same? What is different?

(2l) Please explain what you think Ephesians 4:31-32 means.

(2m) Does Matthew 6:13-14 mean that if we are unforgiving we are not saved? Why or why not?

(2n) Read Luke 11:5-13 and Matthew 7:7-12. What does this mean to our prayer life?

(2o) Tell about a time your prayers were answered in an amazing way.

Lesson 3 - Wealth or Worship (Matthew 6:19-24)

Please read Matthew 6:19-24 and answer the following questions:

[3A] What happens to treasures on earth? _____

[3B] Where should we keep our treasure? _____

[3C] What is kept in the same place as our treasure? _____

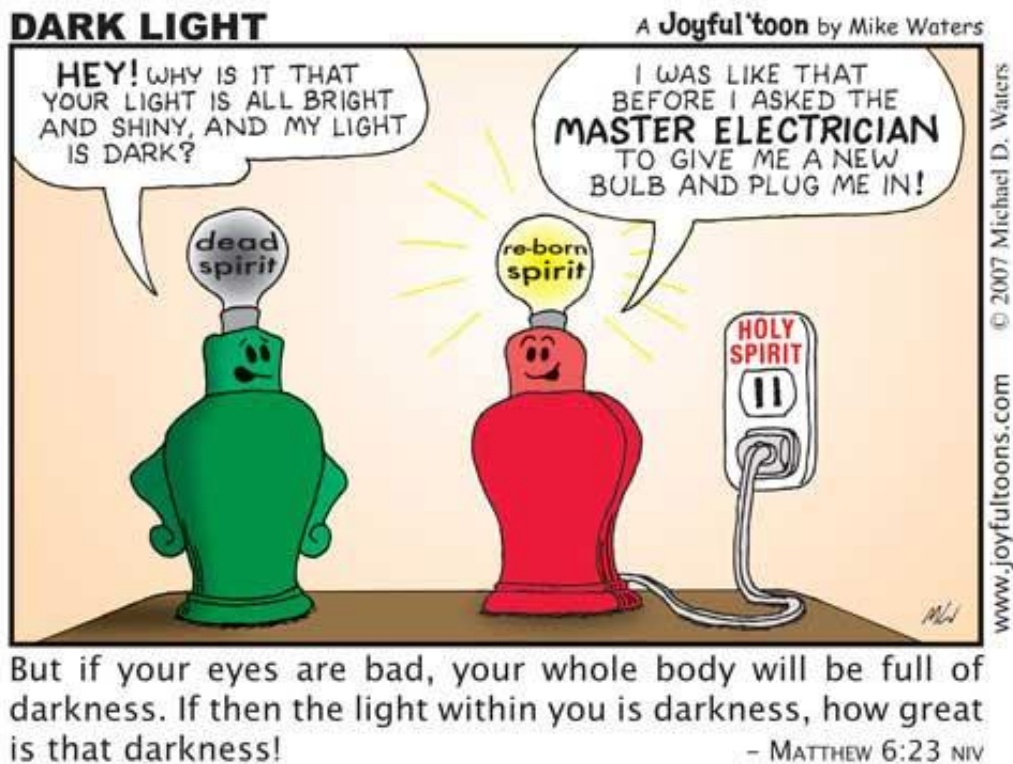
[3D] What is the lamp of the body? _____

[3E] What happens if the eye is bad? _____

[3F] How many masters can a person have? _____

[3G] What are you looking at? Where are your eyes focused? What are the motives of your heart?

Think and Pray _____



----- ANSWERS -----

Lesson 3 - Wealth or Worship (Matthew 6:16-24)

[3A] What happens to treasures on earth?. They destroyed or are stolen. Mt 6:19

[3B] Where should we keep our treasure? In heaven Mt 6:20

[3C] What is kept in the same place as our treasure? Our heart Mt 6:21

[3D] What is the lamp of the body? The eye Mt 6:22

[3E] What happens if the eye is bad? The whole body is full of darkness Mt 6:23

[3F] How many masters can a person have? No more than one Mt 6:24

[3G] If we are looking toward heaven, if we are focused on the cross, if our heart's desire is to please God, we can sort our circumstances out just fine. If we are trying to do some kind of balancing act where we please various people around us, accumulate benefits and favors for ourself, and somehow also please God, it will not work. We will fail.

As always, God is our best example. Some things He gives in secret. He sends his blessings on everyone, the good and the evil. Most people eat their food and never even realize it is from God. They wear their clothes and have no idea that God clothed them. It rains and storms, and snows and blows, while they sleep comfortably in a dry bed. They wake up in the morning in good health, or mostly in good health, and it never occurs to them to thank God for it.

Some things He gives in public. Jesus Christ was lifted up on that cross for all to see. His resurrection is shown by the testimony of over 500 people. We are commissioned to tell everyone as publically and as often as possible, that God loved them so much that He gave His only begotten Son to die for their sins.

If we are going to have a heart wholly devoted to Him, if we are to keep our eyes on heaven and our motives pure, we need Him to be Lord of our life. If you already know Him my message to you is to let Him drive. Quit grabbing the steering wheel away from Him. If you don't know Him in a personal way, my plea to you is that you surrender to His control. He wants to adopt you into His family and fully bless your life.

For further thought:

(3h) What do you think Jesus means by "treasure?"

(3i) In Matthew 6:19-21 it talks about keeping treasures in heaven. What is it talking about? How does this truth apply to your life?

(3j) In Matthew 6:22-24 it talks about the eye being a lamp of the body, and darkness and light. What do these figures of speech represent?

(3k) Of all the money you have earned, been given, or taken in your life, how much is left? What can you learn from this? Where is your treasure?

My further thoughts:

(3h) I think he is talking about whatever you are counting on to get you through difficult times in the future or allow you to have what you really want.

(3i) I think it is talking about doing things we believe will make God proud of us, that He will remind us about later when we are with Him in heaven.

Lesson 4 - Be Worry Free (Matthew 6:25-34)

Please read Matt Matthew 6:25-34 and answer the following questions:

[4A] What is more than food? _____

[4B] Who feeds the birds? _____

[4C] What can not extend the time period of your life? _____

[4D] Do the flowers make clothing or cloth? _____

[4E] What looks better than Solomon? _____

[4F] Who dresses the grass of the field? _____

[4G] When are we to worry? _____

[4H] Who knows our needs? _____

[4I] What are we to seek first? _____

[4J] What has sufficient trouble? _____

[4K] Jesus taught that we should not worry, but in Luke 22:44 wasn't He worried?

Think and Pray _____

THE GREAT WORRINI



A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



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Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

- MATTHEW 6:27 NIV

----- ANSWERS -----

Lesson 4 - Be Worry Free (Matthew 6:25-34)

- [4A] What is more than food? Life Mt 6:25
 [4B] Who feeds the birds? Our heavenly Father Mt 6:26
 [4C] What can not extend the time period of your life? Being worried Mt 6:27
 [4D] Do the flowers make clothing or cloth? No Mt 6:28
 [4E] What looks better than Solomon? The flowers Mt 6:29
 [4F] Who dresses the grass of the field? God Mt 6:30
 [4G] When are we to worry? Never Mt 6:31
 [4H] Who knows our needs? Our heavenly Father Mt 6:32
 [4I] What are we to seek first? His kingdom and His righteousness Mt 6:33
 [4J] What has sufficient trouble? Each day Mt 6:34

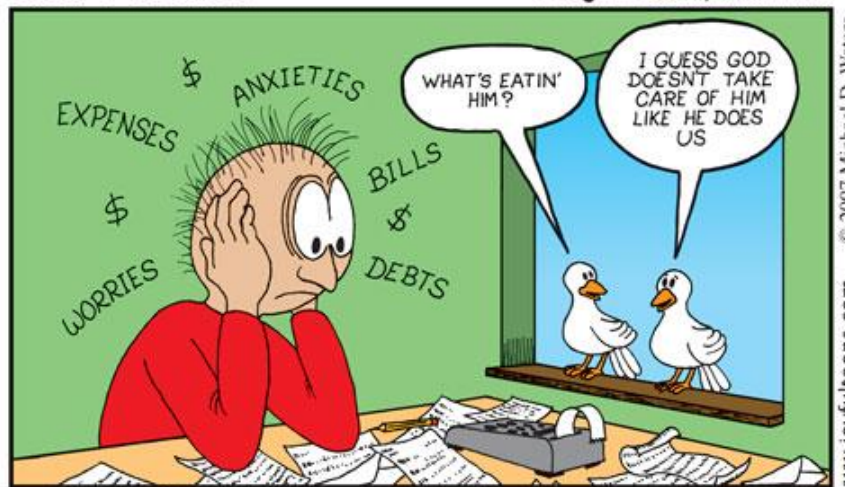
[4K] It may seem like that if you just read the one verse. When I read Luke 22:39-46 it looks like He knows they are crucifying Him the next day and He is being tempted to run and hide, or to call down legions of angels to protect Him, or to otherwise fail to do what He came to do. He was showing us what to do when we face impending difficulties. Pray and ask God for strength to face them. I believe this because in verse 43 the angels strengthen Him. If he was praying to be anxious free, (which is good prayer for us by the way), they would have comforted Him, not strengthened Him. Similarly in verse 46 we see that He was expecting the disciples to "pray that you may not enter into temptation."

For further thought:

- (4L) Please describe a time when it really helped for you to worry about something.
 (4m) What does Philippians 4:4-8 mean to you? How can you better put it into practice?
 (4n) What do you typically worry about? How can you turn those worries into prayers?
 (4o) What verse in all of Matthew chapter 6 do you think would be best to memorize?
 (4p) What have you learned from studying Matthew chapter 6 that you most hope you will remember and apply in your life?
 (4q) If someone asked you what Matthew chapter 6 was about, what would you say?

DON'T WORRY

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?

- MATTHEW 6:26,27 NIV