

# *Who Do You Say That I Am?*

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository  
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

42- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 22  
Secret Purity and Public Hypocrisy- Part 5

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Church February 26, 2023

## **Matthew 6:1-24**

**1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.**

**2 "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.**

**3 "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,**

**4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

**5 "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.**

**6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

**7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.**

**8 So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.**

**9 "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.**

**10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.**

**11 'Give us this day our daily bread.**

**12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.**

**13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'**

**14 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.**

**15 But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.**

**16 "Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.**

**17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face**

**18 so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.**

**19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.**

**20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;**

**21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

**22 "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.**

**23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!**

**24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.**

*To the Glory of God the Holy Father; God the Holy Son;  
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Now as we examine what Jesus is teaching here in what we call, the “*Sermon on the Mount*”- we see that Jesus is addressing four Topics:

1. Giving to the Poor (verses 2-4)
2. Praying (verses 5-15)
3. Fasting (verses 16-18)
4. Wealth (verses 19-24)

... and Jesus is teaching that the new people; of the New Covenant- who will inherit this new “Kingdom of Heaven”- will have the Attributes that He talks about here. And two weeks ago, we began looking at what Jesus taught about Prayer- and I want to continue this today.

Now last time, we found out several things that Jesus never taught. Such as:

1. There is no particular *Posture* in Prayer
2. There is no particular *Place* to pray

3. There is no particular *Time* to pray
4. There is no particular *Attitude* in Prayer

... but what Jesus DID teach is that there are certain things about Prayer that matter to God like:

1. We MUST pray (in Faith-believing)
2. We MUST be *genuine* in our Prayers (not Hypocritical)
3. We MUST pray about the Issues that matter to God (God's Will)
4. We MUST pray so that God alone is glorified

... and the Issues or the Subjects that are *paramount* to God are what Jesus taught here in verses 9-13:

**Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'**

.. and based on what Jesus taught here- we can say that we are NOT to merely memorize these words and then repeat them in Church. But what Jesus taught in verses 9-13 are the Subjects or the Issues that matter the most to God. And so, they should matter the most to us as well. So, ...

- We are to pray about God being the Believer's heavenly Father
- We are to pray that God's Name is to be Hallowed in all we think and do and want and pray about
- We are to pray about God's Kingdom coming to this earth in fullness
- We are to pray that God's Will is done on the earth to the same extent and with the same urgency that God's Will is done in Heaven
- We are to pray about God supplying that which we need for that day
- We are to pray about the Connection of God forgiving our Sins with the Ability that we have to forgive those who have sinned against us
- We are to pray that God will NOT lead us into Temptation
- We are to pray that God will deliver from the Evil one and what the Evil one has to offer us
- We are to pray that God will make us aware that we ask all of this precisely because we know and understand that the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory belongs ONLY to God alone

... and as I told you last time- it is perfectly proper for us to pick one or more Parts of this Guide and pray about that Issue for a day or a week or a month or even a whole year! What does NOT bring God any Glory- is for us to merely parrot these words in Church- without actually crying out to God about the Issues themselves.

Now before I exposit these four verses- I want to *remind* you of what Prayer is all about. Over the Centuries- this wonderful Gift- this “*Means of Grace*” called, “Prayer” has been *co-opted* by the leaders of the visible Church- *especially* here in America- to become another “*Man-centered*” Enterprise of modern Christianity. And through Books and various Teachings- the sheep of God’s Pasture have been taught how human beings can *impose* our will on God; and make *demands* on God- which, in effect, makes God to be nothing more than our own personal “Cosmic Puppet” and a “Divine Tool”- that we can *use* to get whatever our heart craves for.

And with all due respect to those who are very sincere, but who have been caught up in this perversion of Prayer- much of what is being taught about Prayer today and the way that Prayer is being exercised by far too many, who claim to be saved- is Blasphemy!

We need to understand that Prayer was God’s idea. And the main *function* of Prayer; the *end Result* of Prayer- like everything else God has given us- is about God and NOT primarily about us. So, Prayer is about God being Glorified; and about us being so transformed (by what God alone does for us) that we actually desire God’s Will MORE than we desire our own will. And that means that Prayer is NOT *ultimately* about us simply asking God for things. And that also means that Prayer is certainly NOT about us trying to change God’s Mind or twist God’s Arm behind His back- so He will give us what we *want*.

Prayer is FIRST about you and I *discovering* God’s Will. And the *primary* Way we find out what God’s Will is- is to read and study the Scriptures. But Prayer is also, *secondly*, about us being transformed- as we seek God’s Will- to the point where we begin to desire God’s Will MORE than we want our *own* will. And that takes time- because, many times, we either don’t *understand* God’s Will or we don’t *want* it. Many times, before we ever begin to pray- we have already figured out what is or is NOT God’s Will and so, we see Prayer as merely the Way or the Means by which we can convince God to do for us what we already want.

And there are some who actually teach that, since saved people are filled with God’s Spirit- that what we *want* is *automatically* God’s Will or we wouldn’t *want* it in the first place. So, these people teach that we are to ask with abandon- without any hesitation- because to these people- it is ALWAYS God’s Will to heal; it is ALWAYS God’s Will to bless; it is ALWAYS God’s Will to give His people

more stuff; and for us to drive nicer cars; and to live in better houses; and to be married to better spouses; and to shop at the finest stores; and eat the finest food. And since those things are ALWAYS God's WILL- it is NEVER God's Will for anything contrary to that. And then they go on to teach that since that is ALWAYS God's Will- the ONLY reason that God doesn't answer our Prayers along those lines- is because we either don't have enough Faith; or we have Unforgiveness in our hearts; or we have unconfessed Sin in our lives; or who knows what else.

But the Bible doesn't teach that at all. The Bible teaches that Prayer is supposed to humble us- NOT make us Proud. The Bible teaches that Prayer should cause us to *want* God to be glorified- NOT that God would "*make much*" of us. The Bible teaches that God's Will is *infinitely* better; *infinitely* wiser; *infinitely* more important- than *anything* we could ever *want* or *ask for*.

In fact- *any* supposed spiritual Gift; any so-called spiritual Exercise; and any supposed spiritual Discipline that results in us becoming Proud and Arrogant; and Self-satisfied- is of the Devil- pure and simple. The Bible teaches *clearly* and *repeatedly* a fundamental Principle that we ALWAYS need to keep in mind:

**GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE. (Psalm 138:6; Proverbs 3:34; 1Peter 5:5; James 4:6)**

... and nowhere is that *more- true* than with Prayer.

Now the Way this verse is worded looks like we work hard to become Humble *first*- and then God gives us His Grace as a Reward or a Payment for already being Humble. But that is NOT what this means at all. It is God's Grace that *empowers* us to become Humble in the *first place*. So, the Attribute of Humility- biblical Humility; godly Humility- proves that God's Grace is already at work in that person's Life.

And this is vital- because part of what it means to be a fallen human being is that we naturally and normally rob God of His Glory. And we do that by and through our Pride and our Arrogance and our own sense of Self-sufficiency. And that is why almost every time the Bible speaks about Salvation- it also speaks about us NOT being able to boast. "Boasting"- in a *biblical* sense has to do with taking Credit for something or, in other words, Boasting like the Bible defines it- is *us* being glorified; or *us* being exalted; or *us* being "made much of".

But it is God and God ALONE that is ALWAYS to be praised! God ALONE should take Credit- for EVERYTHING! God ALONE should be exalted; and God and God ALONE should be "made much of". So, the Bible teaches that Salvation causes us to not only give God ALL the Praise and the Glory and the Credit- but it *empowers* us to find the fullness of our own Joy in God alone being glorified! And *that* is why we MUST experience the Miracle of the "New Birth"

rather than merely “make a Decision”; or “accept Jesus into our hearts”. Because being “Humble”- in the biblical sense- runs *counter-intuitive* to human nature.<sup>1</sup>

So, God gives us His Grace and that Grace then works *in* us; and *for* us; and *through* us- so that we are radically transformed into being progressively more and more Humble. And then we *delight* when God is glorified; and we will run *away* from any Credit.

And the word that was translated here in **James 4:6** into English as “**Opposed**” comes from a Hebrew and Greek word (*antitassoo/antitattoo*; Strong’s #498) that means: *to resist; to war against; to fight in battle against*. So, when we become prideful in our Prayers- not only is God NOT answering our Prayers favorably- He is actually *resisting* us! God *despises* the prideful person- precisely because we have NO reason to be prideful. And whether you know this or not- the insulting Reality about us is that we are all wicked Sinners, who have committed celestial High Treason against the Owner and Creator of the Universe. And so, when we use Prayer as a Tool to become Arrogant and Self-sufficient- God is *warring* against us; and God is fighting in battle against us! Now why is that? Because we have now become the enemy of God!

God is ALWAYS above; and we are ALWAYS below. And that means that God is NEVER *obligated* to answer our Prayers. We don’t *force* God to move according to the dictate of our Prayers. God answers our Prayers that very SAME Way He does everything else- because He WANTS to- because the God we serve- is Merciful and Kind and because He is Love and because more than anything else- God desires to be glorified! But God will NOT be bullied or coerced by the likes of us.

Now the lost and unsaved world- *despises* the fact that God always wants to be glorified. So, what Salvation does- is to so radically and eternally *change* us- that we actually DELIGHT in God alone being Glorified. And we find the fullness of our *own* Joy- in God alone being exalted! And part of God being glorified- is God’s Will being carried out on this earth- with the *same* degree of Urgency; and to the *same* degree of Finality- that His Will is carried out in Heaven. And that is *why* Jesus told us to pray to that End.

Now I have told you many times, that God didn’t *have* to set Prayer up like this- but the Bible teaches that He did. And this Way with Prayer is *irrevocable*. In other words, God will NOT move any other Way- until Jesus comes back. So, what is Prayer about?

- God desires to do certain things in the earth

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<sup>1</sup> The lost world teaches that being “Soft-spoken” or “Meek” is the same as being “Humble”. But the Bible teaches that being Humble means that you genuinely seek God’s Will above your own.

- God has chosen to do those things- ONLY in *response* to answering the Prayers of His people
- So, we are to pray that God will do- that which He has already said He wants to do
- If God's people do NOT pray- God will NOT move- even though it is His Will to do those things
- But because it IS God's Will to do those things- God will *assure* that His people pray to that End

... and THAT is why Jesus gave us this Model about Prayer.

### **1. Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.**

We are to pray and marvel that through Jesus and all that He has done on our behalf- God Almighty is now our *heavenly* Father. And that should amaze us because nobody under the Old Covenant called God- their "*Father*". But when Jesus came- everywhere He went- He called, God, "*Father*". And then, ONLY because we have been adopted into God's Family- we may now call God, "*Father*". And then we are to pray about the one, single overriding Issue with the one, true, and living God- that His Name alone- is "*hallowed*"; that His Reputation- Who God is- will ALONE be honored and praised and glorified and magnified in ALL that is done!

And we are to then examine our own Lives- and "see to it" that we are living in such a Way that we prove that God is NOT distant- but close to us. We must prove by the overriding Testimony of our daily Life that we are NOT a stranger to God- but His adopted Children. And that the Way we live our own Lives- magnifies God!

### **2. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.**

Now I am teaching that this is what Prayer really is. But is that simply the rantings of some "po-dunk" Preacher- or is it taught in the Bible? Well, let's see. Please turn with me to read what the Old Testament Prophet named Daniel taught about this from **Daniel 9:1&2:**

**1 In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus, of Median descent, who was made king over the kingdom of the Chaldeans —**

**2 in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.**

Now Daniel along with most of the Jews, who had been living in Israel had been taken captive into Babylon during the 6<sup>th</sup> Century BC. And if you calculate the Time-frame when Darius had been made King over the Chaldean (Babylonian) Kingdom- we can deduce that the people of God had been in Captivity a little more than 68 years at the time that Daniel wrote this. So, after Daniel and the rest had already been in Captivity about 68-1/2 years- the Prophet wrote this Account that we just read. So, Daniel was taken captive as a young man and had spent the majority of his entire Life in Babylon as a slave of the pagan Babylonians.

And Daniel says here that he was reading what the Prophet Jeremiah had prophesied earlier about this Captivity and about how long the Captivity would last:

**... I, Daniel, observed in the books the number of the years which was revealed as the word of the Lord to Jeremiah the prophet for the completion of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years.**

Now this is a *lazy* translation of an Aramaic Passage into English because it talks about “**books**”. But books as we know them today- were not even invented yet.<sup>2</sup> So, what Daniel wrote and what this verse *should* say in English is “*scrolls*” or “*tablets*” or even just “*writings*”.

Now think about what has just happened. Daniel and the rest of the southern two Tribes had been in the Babylonian Captivity for around 68-1/2 years. And at that time- Daniel read what the Prophet Jeremiah had prophesied about how long the Captivity would last- 70 years! So, at this point Daniel now knows that in a little over 1-1/2 years- God will move and the Jews will be allowed to return back to Israel!

So, this is God’s Will! This is a “done- deal”! This going to happen! God has *infallibly* spoken through the mouth of the Prophet Jeremiah and revealed what God’s Will is to Daniel. So, there is no doubt as to what will happen in less than two years from that moment. So, in around 18 months from that moment- God will sovereignly *cause* the Babylonian rulers to allow the Jews to go back home and their time of Captivity will be over!

Okay- so now that Daniel knows what God’s Will is- what does he do? How does Daniel *respond* to the Reality that- without any doubt- that he and all the

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<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to say when books were first "invented" or who invented them, as cultures have been sharing information through different mediums for thousands of years. As early as 3,000 BC, the Sumerians were using pictograms or cuneiform writing on clay tablets. Egyptians began using papyrus scrolls at the same time to record history, philosophies, and stories. The first books were created around 500 BC as hand-written scrolls. In the early 16th century, pamphlets were the first printed materials used to share information widely. They were popular in England, France, and Germany, and were frequently used to debate ideas and religious beliefs. Martin Luther and the leaders of the Protestant Reformation used them to sway the public against the Catholic Church.



other Jews will be allowed to return back to Israel and go home in less than two years from that moment? Look at verse 3 and the *first* part of verse 4:

**3 So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek Him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes.**

**4 I prayed to the Lord my God and confessed...**

What? Daniel just found out that it is God's Will to allow the Jews to go home and he responds by doing four things:

1. Prayer
2. Supplications
3. Fasting
4. Confession of Sin

No why is Daniel doing these four things? He already knows what God's Will is- so, why doesn't Daniel shout the Victory? Why doesn't Daniel leap for Joy? Why doesn't he dance with Joy all over the Babylonian Kingdom? Isn't this fantastic news? Why no Celebration? And Daniel knows that God is absolutely Sovereign- so, this WILL happen! It cannot fail!

So, why does he pray? He already knows what God's Will is- and he knows that NOTHING can stop God's Will from happening. So, why is Daniel's *first* Response to confess Sin; and to fast; and to give God- his Supplications; and to pray? I mean what is there to pray about? He just found out what God is going to do- so shouldn't Daniel simply sit back and relax and watch God move?

What this shows us, dear friends, is what I call, the "*Pattern of Prayer*". And it proves that what I have taught you is true. God desires to do certain things in the earth. But God has determined to do those things ONLY by answering the Prayers of His people. And to *facilitate* that- God has revealed some or all of His Will through His Word. And when God's people read that it is God's Will to do certain things- we are then to pray and ask God to do- what He has *already* said was His Will to do. And this is why Jesus told us to pray,

**Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven**

Now *whenever* God's Will is done in the earth- that is a "Win" for God's Kingdom. For example, when a chosen soul is saved- God's Kingdom has been expanded in the earth to that extent. Because, instead of now living their

Lives to their *own* glory- now that they are saved- those people will now live their Lives- so that God will be glorified!

We must understand that God's Kingdom expands throughout the world- one soul at a time. And the Dominion of God's Kingdom started very small and insignificant- *like a mustard seed* (**Matthew 13:31**)- with a small group of sacred men in a Prayer meeting in the Upper Room- 2,000 years ago. And the Expanse of God's Kingdom is very slow- *like how a tree grows*. But the Growth and the Expanse and the Dominion of God's Kingdom is *relentless*. It never stops- day or night.

So, as the Gospel is preached to more and more people- then more and more people will be saved. And as more and more people are saved- they will live their Lives to God's Glory and God's Kingdom will be manifested through those saved people living their Lives according to "Kingdom Principles" rather than according to the pagan world.

So, for example, if a businessman is saved- he will now run his Business to the Glory of God. If a Lawyer or Doctor is saved- he will conduct his Practice to God's Glory. If a Housewife is saved- she will instill the Word of God into her children and her neighbors and friends. If a person who works in the Media, is saved- he will NOT tell lies and he will report the News accurately. But how long will this go on? Until one thing happens:

**... the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea. (Habakkuk 2:14)**

... and then Jesus will come back. And when Jesus is finally here- then God's Kingdom will have "come" *in its fullness*; and God's Will- will have been done- *in its fullness*!

### **3. Give us this day our daily bread.**

We must ask God for *everything* we need and then acknowledge Him when He does that. But that is NOT all that this Issue requires us to understand and pray about. We also must understand that we do NOT need for God to merely tell us WHAT to do. We also need God to Empower and Enable us to do what He has told us to do. And that is what God's Grace is all about. So, we don't need God's Grace for Salvation and then we are to use our own human Strength for everything else. No! EVERYTHING God tells us to do- *requires* God's Grace. And EVERYTHING we do- that will bring God Glory and bring Joy to us- requires a dead and risen Savior as well. So, NOTHING is done in the earth that glorifies God- outside of Him lavishing His Grace on us!

Remember, what the Apostle wrote in **Matthew 4:4**:

**MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.**

... so, it isn't enough that we carry out God's Will in the earth. We must carry out God's Will- by being *empowered* by God's Grace. And then we must carry out God's Will in the earth- in such a Way- that God alone is glorified! And we also must carry out God's Will in the earth- in such a Way- that we experience the fullness of our Joy as well! ALL OF THAT is God's Will- NOT merely God giving us everything we need for the carrying out of God's Will in the earth.

And we simply CANNOT do that- unless God gives us what we need to accomplish that Goal. But that MUST be our Goal. Because if our Goal is to glorify *ourselves*- or to carry out *our* will in the earth- then God will NOT provide what we need. So, if our Goal is to prove to the world how spiritual we really are- so that people will admire us- then God has NOT promised to provide all we need for that. We are to ask God to give to us EVERYTHING we need so that three things will happen:

1. God's Will is done in the earth
2. God's Will is done in the earth- in the Way God desires (Grace)
3. God's Will is done in the earth- so that our Joy is made full

**4. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.**

Now here is an Issue that really matters with God. Jesus taught us to pray about Forgiveness here- but with a *Caveat*. So, it is Forgiveness with an *Exception*. And this proves- more than most of these Issues- *why* it is so wrong to simply memorize the words of the "Lord's Prayer" and then repeat them in Church. Human beings really have an Issue with Forgiveness. Unforgiveness is one of our biggest Weaknesses and our biggest Failures. And there are countless Sermons and Teachings out there that either *minimize* what Jesus taught here or that outright *contradict* what Jesus taught.

Make no mistake about this, dear friends, if you have truly experienced the Miracle of the New Birth- you WILL be in this new Kingdom of Heaven- forever! But if you have experienced the Miracle of the New Birth- you will also forgive those who have sinned against you. You CANNOT be born again

and NOT forgive. The two go hand-in-hand. And Unforgiveness takes on two Characteristics:

1. You WON'T forgive
2. You CAN'T forgive

And if you WON'T forgive those who have sinned against you- you are testifying loud and clear that you have NOT experienced the Miracle of the New Birth- because Forgiveness is an unmistakable Fruit of being born again. So, if you *refuse* to forgive- that means you are *deceived* about your experience with the New Birth. And that means you will NOT inherit this Kingdom.

But if you CAN'T forgive those who have sinned against you- you are testifying that the Power of God giving you a new, divine Nature and the Power of God the Holy Spirit dwelling inside of you is NOT strong enough to empower you to forgive. And that is a Lie. So, if you think you do not have either the Power or the Ability to forgive those who have sinned against you- you either don't *understand* how much Power the Bible says you really do have; or you don't *believe* how much Power you really do have. And both Ignorance and that lack of Belief is fixed through biblical Counselling and Bible Study.

But Unforgiveness- the *Inability* and the *Unwillingness* to forgive someone else- is a huge Destroyer in the earth. It is Unforgiveness that breaks up Partnerships and Friendships and Families and Churches and even Nations. Unforgiveness starts Wars and it is Unforgiveness that ends many Marriages. We could almost eliminate Divorce by next Thursday- *at least among the saved*- if the people who say they are saved- would simply forgive their Spouse.

But we must realize that human beings are never more like God when they forgive. And they are never more like satan when they don't. And one of the main reasons God gave us the Gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling continually inside of us- was to remove the Excuse that we simply don't have the Ability (or the Desire) to forgive those who have genuinely sinned against us.

What Jesus told us to pray about was that God would forgive the Transgressions we have sinned against Him- But ONLY to the extent that we would forgive the Transgressions that others have sinned against us. In other words, we are to ask God- *“Do NOT forgive the Transgressions that I have committed against You- UNLESS I forgive the Transgressions that others have committed against me!”* Another way of understanding this is for us to pray, *“Hold my Sins against me- UNTIL I let go of the Sins of others!”* And as we ponder this- we need to remember a few important things:

- We do NOT earn Forgiveness from God by forgiving the Sins of others
- By holding the Sins that others have committed toward us- against them- we are saying that those Sins are much *worse* than the Sins we have committed against God

Now because the Issues of Forgiveness versus Unforgiveness is so Powerful and also, so Rewarding- I will deal with it in great detail next time.

### **5. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

Now on the surface- this is a very strange Prayer. Jesus told us to pray that God will NOT lead us into Temptation. So, does that mean that, if we do NOT pray- God *might* lead us into Temptation? And if that is true- then what do we do with what the half-brother of Jesus infallibly taught in **James 1:13**:

**Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone.**

... yet Matthew also infallibly wrote,

**Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. (Matthew 4:1)**

So, when you combine ALL that God's Word teaches about us and God and Temptation- we see that there is not a dime's worth of Difference between "Tests", "Trials", and "Temptations". The root word that has been translated into English as "Temptation"- is the SAME word that was translated into English as "Trials" and "Tests". And we know that God DOES *allow* us to go through Trials and Tests. And that means that God also *allows* us to go through Temptations as well. Now God doesn't tempt us to sin against Him- Himself. But God DOES allow us to be tempted. But the key word in what Jesus taught here in this "Guide of Prayer" is NOT the word, "**temptation**" but the word, "**into**".

So, God does NOT *personally* do the tempting- He does NOT put evil Desires in our hearts- precisely because God can have no evil Desires in His Heart. But the Bible teaches that God absolutely DOES bring us into the presence of many Tests and Trials and Temptations. And that means that God absolutely allows us to be tempted.

But why would God want us to be tempted? Does He *want* us to sin against Him? Many teach that God allows us to be tempted- "because then He will see

what we are going to do.” But I disagree because God is Omniscient and God already knows what we are going to do and who are His. **2Timothy 2:19b** says,

**... The Lord knows those who are His ...**

But what is NOT known- is from *our* Perspective- NOT God’s. So, while it is true that God knows ALL things- we don’t. So, we may *think* we are something we are not. And by going through the Test or the Trial or the Temptation- we reveal- *to ourselves*- what is true about us.

We should remember what the wisest man in all the world at that time wrote:

**Proverbs 20:24a**

**Man's steps are ordained by the Lord ...**

... and that means ALL of our Steps- even the Steps we take in our Trials; our Tests; and our Temptations.

The Reality is that, because this world is “fallen”, *every* Step we take- *every* moment of *every* day- is a Step into the *presence* of Temptation- where we might fail or prove victorious. There is not a single moment here on this earth- that is not a moment of Temptation- an Opportunity- when Unbelief and Disobedience is not a distinct Possibility.

What Jesus was teaching here- was NOT that we should pray *against* that kind of “sovereign Guidance”. What it DOES teach us- is that we must pray that the Temptation we face- does not take us “*IN*”. Jesus said,

**... do not lead us into temptation ...**

... do not allow me to be “*taken in*” by that Temptation.

So, Jesus wants us to pray, “*Please God, give me the Strength and the Wisdom and the Power to resist whatever Temptation I may face this day- so I may prove* (to myself) that I truly belong to you!” Because Jesus also said,

**... Each day has enough trouble of its own. (Matthew 6:34b)**

Every genuine Believer faces *innumerable* Temptations- every day. That’s what this Life is: endless Choices between Belief and Unbelief; between Obedience and Disobedience. But our Lord taught us to pray, “*Almighty God, forbid that I would yield to Temptation. Hold me back from stepping inside the Temptation- so that my Life may bring You Glory; and great Joy to myself; and*

*that my Faithfulness might bring Encouragement to my brothers and sisters and prove to the lost world that Jesus really is the Treasure of the Universe!”*

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.