

# **How to Connect with God: By Focusing Upon Who He Is Matthew 6:9-13**

Please open with me to the most widely known passage of Scripture, in Matthew 6. The Lord's Prayer as this passage is known is a life-altering introduction to the transforming power that comes by comprehending the implications of, and actually living like, God is our Heavenly Father.

## **UNDERSTANDING THAT GOD IS OUR FATHER**

Note first the context of this widely known passage. Halfway through one of the greatest messages of all time, Jesus pauses. He has just spent an entire chapter in our Bibles introducing the listeners of Century One, and by inspiration all of us to God the Father, in seven amazing ways.

If you look carefully you can see in Matthew 5:16-6:6, Jesus uses the term "Father" seven times about God in Heaven; and each time describing in simply powerful ways who God the Father truly is. Then Jesus pauses to say: "That Father I just described to you completely, in those seven attributes of His character, is the One you must talk to each day."

*Prayer is talking to God as our Father.*

*Prayer starts by a focus I our hearts on just Who it is that we are talking to.*

Then, after that pause to command our prayers start with a focus upon God as our Father in Heaven, Jesus continues the message with seven more declarations about God as Father. There are exactly 15 references to God as Father in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7.

There are seven references to God the Father leading up to the institution of the Lord's Prayer, and then seven references to God the Father following the Lord's Prayer. We could illustrate how Jesus declared the centrality of God the Father to prayer by noting what Jesus does like this:

*Father-Father-Father-Father- Father-Father-Father-**PRAY**-Father-Father-Father-Father-Father-Father-Father*

That means there are two complete sets of seven facets of God that Jesus emphasizes by sharing them before and after the central point of our connection to God in prayer.

## **SHARPENING OUR FOCUS UPON GOD AS OUR FATHER**

To begin our time listening and responding to God's Word today, please quietly bow and repeat these words we are focusing on with me. Only, say them with your eyes closed but your heart as open as you can make it to the One you address these words to:

Matthew 6:9-13 (NKJV) In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father 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 forgive our debtors.

13 And do not lead us into temptation,

But deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

## LEARNING WHAT IT MEANS THAT GOD IS OUR FATHER

Jesus described His Father to us.

Jesus introduces as Father, the One seated on the Throne of Heaven.

Jesus invites us to pray to His Father by understanding Who He is.

Here in Matthew 5-7 Jesus introduces us to some of the amazing characteristics or attributes of Our Father, Who is also to be understood as The One on The Throne:

1. Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Rules the Universe**. Matthew 5:16,34 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven; 34 But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: Rules the Universe*. What does that mean? **He is Sovereign**.
2. Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Is All-Powerful**. Matthew 5:45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: is All-Powerful*. What does that mean? **He is Omnipotent**.
3. Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Is Perfect**. Matthew 5:48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: is Perfect*. What does that mean? **He is Self-Sufficient**.

4. Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Rewards**. Matthew 6:1 (NKJV) Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: Rewards*. What does that mean? **He is Love**.
  
5. Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Sees Everything**. Matthew 6:4 (NKJV) that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: Sees Everything*. What does that mean? **He is Omniscient**.
  
6. Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Is Everywhere Present**. Matthew 6:6 (NKJV) But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: is Everywhere present*. What does that mean? **He is Omnipresent**.
  
7. Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Feels our Needs**. Matthew 6:8 (NKJV) “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: Feels our Needs*. What does that mean? **He is Gracious**.
  
8. Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Hears our Prayers**. Matthew 6:9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: is the One Who Hears our Prayers*. What does that mean? **He Listens**.
  
9. Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Forgives Sins**. Matthew 6:14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: Forgives Sins*. What does that mean? **He Justifies**.
  
10. Our Father in Heaven: **Disciplines His Children**. Matthew 6:15 (NKJV) But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. *Our Father in Heaven Disciplines His Children*. What does that mean? **He is Holy**.
  
11. Our Father in Heaven: **Watches Everything**. Matthew 6:18 (NKJV) so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. *Our Father in Heaven Sees Everything*. What does that mean? **He is Omnipresent**.
  
12. Our Father in Heaven: **Sustains Everything**. Matthew 6:26 (NKJV) Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? *Our Father in Heaven Sustains Everything*. What does that mean? **He is the Sustainer**.

13. Our Father in Heaven: **Understands all our Needs.** Matthew 6:32 (NKJV) For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. *Our Father in Heaven Understands all our needs.* What does that mean? **He is Caring.**
14. Our Father in Heaven: **Gives the Holy Spirit.** Matthew 7:11 (NKJV) If you then, being 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! *Our Father in Heaven Gives the Holy Spirit.* What does that mean? **He is The Supplier.**
15. Our Father in Heaven: **Controls the Gate of Heaven.** Matthew 7:21 (NKJV) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. *Our Father in Heaven Controls the Gate of Heaven.* What does that mean? **He is The Savior.**

## WHAT DO GOD'S ATTRIBUTES MEAN

Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Rules the Universe.** Matthew 5:16,34 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. v.34 But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: Rules the Universe.* What does that mean? **He is Sovereign.**

**God's Sovereignty is stated in utter simplicity** by Christ in Matthew 10:29 (NKJV) Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father's will. God's controls all things with His loving hands and nothing escapes His guidance: neither the designs of the wicked (even history's most wicked dictators), nor nature's fury against the lives of humans (such as the recent disasters), nor the works of demons or even Satan, and certainly not our own free choices. Romans 8:28 tells us that God is working all things together for His and our good and verses 38-39 delineate that nothing is beyond the control of God's sovereign hand. No matter how dreadful any situation looks, God is still in charge.

Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Is All-Powerful.** Matthew 5:45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: is All-Powerful.* What does that mean? **He is Omnipotent.**

**God's omnipotence means** that there are no limits to His power. He has all power, can exert all power, and nothing can constrain His decisions apart from His own will to limit Himself.

Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Is Perfect.** Matthew 5:48 Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: is Perfect.* What does that mean? **He is Self-Sufficient.**

**God's self-sufficiency sets Him apart** from everything else. All other creatures, beings, or objects have beginnings, and all need God to cause them to continue to exist or they would cease ("by Him all things consist" Col. 1:17). God does not need anything to exist, He is the source of life but never tires, exhausts, or depletes. He is as great after exerting power as he was before. We need sleep, food, air, water, and safety. God needs nothing but wants our worship.

Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Rewards**. Matthew 6:1 (NKJV) Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: Rewards*. What does that mean? **He is Love.**

**God's love means** that He has chosen to sacrifice Himself for others. He is not selfish but giving. He so loves that He gives. His love is reflected in His goodness (all He does is good and He is the standard of good); His mercy (He patiently withholds judgment due upon sin because He is merciful); and His grace (He gives to those undeserving of

Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Sees Everything**. Matthew 6:4 (NKJV) that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: Sees Everything*. What does that mean? **He is Omniscient.**

**God's omniscience means** He sees everything equally vividly both going on presently, into all of the future, and to the furthest past. God does not learn, count, measure, or calculate. He knows all that can be known at all times.

Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Is Everywhere Present**. Matthew 6:6 (NKJV) But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: is Everywhere present*. What does that mean? **He is Omnipresent.**

**God's omnipresence means** that He is completely present in every part of the physical Universe at all times, but responds differently depending upon where He is. There is no place that we can be separated from Him.

Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Feels our Needs**. Matthew 6:8 (NKJV) "Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: Feels our Needs*. What does that mean? **He is Gracious.**

**God's graciousness means** that He knows what we feel, fear, need, and desire and dispenses kindly according to His goodness. There are three facets of His graciousness: God's *mercy* means God's goodness toward those in misery and distress. God's *grace* means God's goodness toward those who deserve only punishment. God's *patience* means God's goodness in withholding of punishment toward those who sin over a period of time.

Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Hears our Prayers**. Matthew 6:9 In this manner, therefore, pray: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: is the One Who Hears our Prayers*. What does that mean? **He Listens.**

**God's listening ability means** He can hear our words, see our thoughts, know our feelings, and even have communicated what we are unable to frame. He is the best and most complete listener possible.

Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: **Forgives Sins.** Matthew 6:14 “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. *Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: Forgives Sins.* What does that mean? **He Justifies.**

**God's justice means** that He demands all debts to be paid. There is no debt excusable because He is just. Forgiveness is only available through the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, God does allow the debts of those who place their trust in Christ alone to be covered for them by Christ's death in their place.

Our Father in Heaven: **Disciplines His Children.** Matthew 6:15 (NKJV) But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. *Our Father in Heaven Disciplines His Children.* What does that mean? **He is Holy.**

**God's holiness** means that he is separated from sin and devoted to seeking his own honor. This definition contains both a relational quality (separation from) and a moral quality (the separation is from sin or evil, and the devotion is to the good of God's own honor or glory).

Our Father in Heaven: **Watches Everything.** Matthew 6:18 (NKJV) so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. *Our Father in Heaven Sees Everything.* What does that mean? **He is Omnipresent.**

**God's omnipresence means** that He is present and witnessing every event, everywhere there is, and at all times. So in the truest sense we never are out from under His watchfully loving gaze.

Our Father in Heaven: **Sustains Everything.** Matthew 6:26 (NKJV) Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? *Our Father in Heaven Sustains Everything.* What does that mean? **He is the Sustainer.**

**God's omnipresence means** that just as God is always *present to sustain* or to keep the universe existing and functioning in the way he intended it to function. In this sense the divine nature of Christ is everywhere present: “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:17). The author of Hebrews says of God the Son that he is (continually) “upholding the universe by his word of power” (Heb. 1:3).

Our Father in Heaven: **Understands all our Needs.** Matthew 6:32 (NKJV) For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. *Our Father in Heaven Understands all our needs.* What does that mean? **He is Caring.**

**God's wisdom means** that God always chooses the best goals and the best means to those goals. This definition goes beyond the idea of God knowing all things and specifies that God's decisions about what he will do are always wise decisions: that is, they always will bring about the best results (from God's ultimate perspective), and they will bring about those results through the best possible means.

He even knows each time a sparrow “falls” the Greek word may actually be bigger than “falls” (as in “dies”) it can also be translated as “hops” along the ground” (see also Matthew 10:29-32).

Next time you see one of those clouds of birds swirling, settling on a patch of grass, and all hopping around: remember that God is aware of each hop of each bird. Then look up and say wow. If the birds that exist for a couple of seasons, have each “hop” tracked by God: how much MORE does He care for YOU Jesus said (of little faith)?

He even counts the hairs of our heads (Matthew 10:32). Again that word doesn't mean total count but more like inventory count, He knows the “serial number” for each one of our hairs individually.

Our Father on The Throne of Heaven: Cares Deeply for us.

Our Father in Heaven: **Gives the Holy Spirit.** Matthew 7:11 (NKJV) If you then, being 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! *Our Father in Heaven Gives the Holy Spirit.* What does that mean? **He is The Supplier.**

**God supplies** all we need to live and serve Him through giving us His Spirit to live within us so that God may be with us.

Our Father in Heaven: **Controls the Gate of Heaven.** Matthew 7:21 (NKJV) “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. *Our Father in Heaven Controls the Gate of Heaven.* What does that mean? **He is The Savior.**

**God's wrath means** that he intensely hates all sin, but as a Savior He offers the only way for humans to escape His wrath and have their penalty placed on Christ. God stands at the gates of Heaven and only allows those who have bowed to Him to enter.

## HOW SHOULD WE APPROACH GOD AS WE PRAY?

Jesus explains how we approach the One on the Throne of Heaven, and it revolutionizes our prayers. First we come knowing in our hearts that He is Our Father.

**He is Kind:** we don't have to fear.

**He is Perfect:** He needs no improvement at His job as Father.

**He Rewards:** He wants to pour out His blessings upon us.

**He Watches:** He Sees everything, Hears Prayers, and is everywhere present.

**He Knows our Needs:** even before we ask but has chosen that prayer is the way He works in us and through us.

**He Hears:** He is the One we pray to.

**He Forgives sins:** and knows how much we have failed Him, and will fail Him, and still forgives us endlessly.

***He deeply cares for us:*** He is neither distant, nor detached. He bears long with us (Luke 18:1-8) as we persistently seek Him.

## LETS SPEAK TO HIM NOW

Jesus described His Father to us.

Jesus introduces as Father, the One seated on the Throne of Heaven.

Jesus invites us to pray to His Father by understanding Who He is.

Join me as we stand and lift our voices to Him as our Father.