

## The Ministry of Prayer II

*And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth; they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

Matthew 6:5-6

Look at the beginning of the verses above. Jesus says, "When you pray..." He didn't say, "If you pray..." There is an expectation that the Lord has. He expects us to pray. He is not just desirous of our coming to him with prayers, requests, petitions and worship; he is basically telling us that we need to be doing this.

Jesus also expects that this is not going to be some kind of ritual or showy thing, but that we will come to him in private. He is not the least bit impressed with all our efforts to please men. He kind of slam-dunks that sort of mindset. You can't tell it from the English translation that you read above but in the original language, Jesus uses two different words for "reward." If you get a chance, look it up in Strong's Concordance to verify this. The first word that he uses for showy prayer is a temporary reward. What Jesus means here is that if you want man's reward, you can have it. It's yours. But remember, man is fickle. What he praises today he condemns tomorrow. What good is a temporary applause from man verses those eternal answers from heaven? And that is exactly what the second word for reward stands for, an eternal reward that comes from an eternal God who can move the mountains, dry up the sea or calm the storm. You are learning a very important principle here.

Private prayer before the Father of creation equals an open heaven and eternal consequences. The enemy cannot stop it, delay it, change it or quench it. God is in total control of secret prayer! Go get shut away with God!

Hey, speaking of secret prayer, look again at the verses above and notice that Jesus specifically says that we pray to a Father who is unseen. Jesus doesn't mean that we cannot see God spiritually. He means that when we go to God and are alone with him and are talking away, we are talking to someone that we cannot see with our physical eyes. In other words you look like a lunatic in your prayer closet because you are carrying on, talking, laughing, crying, dancing, clapping, listening and so on and NO ONE'S THERE!

At least not in the physical; therein is the reward. You are carrying on as if someone IS there. And...someone is! How beautiful! He is there. Jesus assures us that the Father is there, "Then your Father who sees..." That is a promise. You are not in an empty room. God is there. Wow! Goose bump city. Draw near to God? He will draw near to you. There is full assurance there. Next time we will talk some more about the unseen aspect of prayer but for now, go. Go to him. Go into your room and close the world out so they don't think you're crazy and go crazy. Talk, laugh, cry, shout, listen, dance, sing, ask, seek, knock or whatever you want to do in the presence of your Father. Just go do it. God is expecting you.