



Empowering People to Change the World

## **The Father's Secret Place**

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## **The Father's Secret Place**

***Learning to be still before God and discover healthy living***

***God can move mountains in my life***

***I am building up my faith with God's Holy Word***

***I am coming alive in the power of the Holy Spirit***

***With Jesus, all things are possible***

**Jesus, in his famous sermon, is presenting the power of the “secret place with God.”**

- We are so driven to perform and succeed that we drive ourselves literally insane with such a busy and crammed schedule that we lose the purpose of our existence.
- For example, in the Greek myth, Sisyphus is punished for his pride by being forced to roll a boulder up a hill, only to have it roll down once it reaches the top. This endless loop is his fate for all eternity, and more or less describes the character of the false god of this world. Despite the promise of a platinum retirement, easy living and comfortable lifestyle, you are never quite done earning it, paying for it or maintaining it. If you worship the American Dream, you may never awaken from your Sisyphean nightmare.

## **God made us to Need Rest and Quiet**

- The most revered of the 10 Commandments is the most repeated throughout scripture and most ignored, is the taking of a sabbath rest.
- We are the first generation in 2000 years of church history that is on the go, 24/7. We seem to never rest. We do not observe the Sabbath and are killing ourselves spiritually and physically.
  - We over-plan
  - We over-commit
  - We multi-task
  - We are hurting our relationships and do not have time for God!

- The result is NONSTOP STRESS and an epidemic of sicknesses.
  - Our body never knows when or how to shut down and rest.
  - The result are endocrine disorders and adrenal insufficiency.
  - Doctors are saying that the physical consequences are devastating to our health.
  - Our body never knows when the next stop day is coming and continues to send out stress hormones.
  - When we are under stress for long periods of time, our bodies produce another stress hormone called cortisol.
  - Cortisol overproduction contributes to a host of medical problems: including diabetes, heart disease, weight gain, acne, depression, anxiety, sleep disruption, digestive problems, memory and concentration impairment.

**Bottom line: constant stress does not just make us grumpy and tired, but it makes us sick! It can kill you!**

In our passage, Jesus is putting a “pause button” on the Loud, Fast-paced, busy lifestyle we live in.

- It is like He could see the work of the Pharisees constantly announcing their next religious exercise with trumpets in the street corners as prophetic of our Smart Phones and the Internet heralding the next great worship artist or sermon.
- Jesus is challenging the religious system of seeking man’s approval and man’s rewards through being more religious than everyone else, and points us back to “The Secret Place” with God.
- To be still. **Psalm 46:10 (NAS) “Cease striving and know that I am God;**
- 12 times we will observe Jesus calling God “His Father”. This sermon is about having a deep intimate relationship with God the Father.

**The Father’s Secret Place: *learning to be still before God and discover healthy living***

## The Four Ways to the Father's Secret Place

### Matthew 6:1-4

***“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. <sup>2</sup> Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. <sup>3</sup> But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, <sup>4</sup> that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.*”**

#### 1. The Father's Secret Place: Giving from the Heart

- This seems to contradict what Jesus said earlier, ***“let you light so shine before men, that they see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16***
- Matthew Henry said it well, “Although Christians are to be seen doing good works, they must not do good works simply to be seen.”
- Jesus is warning against cultivating an image of righteousness--It is almost impossible to do spiritual things in front of others without thinking what their opinion is of us and if they are thinking better or worse of us.
- Jesus is calling the Pharisees “hypocrites” and the word here used is “hupokrites.” Used of actors on the stage who wore masks and included mechanisms for amplifying their voice. Since the dramas were question and answer dialogue, Hupokrites are actors who are playacting, reading a script or one putting on an act. A hypocrite is performing and posing for the crowd.
- At the Feast times, when the time for giving of alms was announced, the trumpets would blast. DA Carson writes, “These occasions afforded golden opportunities for ostentation.”
- Jesus—this is a heart issue. Why are you giving?

- Two Heart Motives at stake: God as our personal Father or God for personal Fame?
  - **Matthew 6:1-3 Audience.** Who is watching over you? Who is noticing what you do? Is it for people or God?
    - Are you doing it for an audience of One or many?
    - We have to settle this one.
  - **Matthew 6:4 Reward.** Where does our reward come from? If you are giving to be noticed by people, then the feeling you get and the status you receive is your reward. If you do it for them, and it is noticed by them, then you have your reward.
    - But if you are giving to God for His applause, not men, He will reward you!
    - **Hebrews 11:6** *“without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”*

When we give to others in ministry and finances, God sees our heart and our motives. He will reward you! He notices your heart. When others do not see it, He does! He sees your love, your passion and your desire to bless others. He sees you!!

### **Matthew 6:5-13**

<sup>5</sup> ***“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup> “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him. <sup>9</sup> In this manner, therefore, pray:***

***Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.***

***<sup>10</sup> Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.***

***<sup>11</sup> Give us this day our daily bread.***

***<sup>12</sup> And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors.***

***<sup>13</sup> 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.***

## **2. The Father's Secret Place: Prayer**

- The Pharisees and Scribes wanted to be noticed by men
- “Rabbi Levi said, ‘Whoever is long in prayer is heard.’
- But Jesus is contradicting this and calling us to go to a secret place of prayer. Not using repetitious prayers but truly praying from your heart.
- Prayer required more of the passion of the heart than the persuasions of the tongue.
- Jesus gives us the model for prayer—too much here and on another day we will study this great prayer.
- **How do we Seek God in Prayer?**
  - Set a time to pray each day.
  - Find a special place for prayer.
  - Get quiet and pray through the scriptures.
  - Take time to listen for His voice.

### **Matthew 6:14-15**

***<sup>14</sup> “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. <sup>15</sup> But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.***

## **3. The Father's Secret Place: Forgiveness**

- Vs. 12 in the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus takes us to task for not forgiving those who have hurt us.
- He has just told us **“love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.” (Matthew 5:44)**
- Have you forgiven that person? Have you forgiven your parents? Have you forgiven that former spouse?
  - Forgiveness does not mean you trust them. Forgiveness is instantaneous; trust is earned over time.
  - Forgiveness does not mean it is easy. It is a process.
  - Forgiveness does not mean end of discussion. How many of us husbands have said to our wives, “I said I was sorry. So, why do we have to keep talking about it?” Even when we forgive, it can be really important for the one sinned against to share how the offender hurt or affected them. We need to realize the consequences of our sins. Often we need to consider all that led up to our sin—how we got there in the first place—in order to prevent future sin.
  - And finally, forgiveness does not mean there are no consequences for sin. If I foolishly max out my credit card, then confess my sin, God will forgive me, but I will still have to pay off my debt, which might take years.

### **Matthew 6:16-18**

***<sup>16</sup> “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.***

***<sup>17</sup> But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, <sup>18</sup> 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.***

## **4. The Father’s Secret Place: Fasting**

- Do not fast to be noticed by people! Do not fast to be noticed by other ministries or churches!
- Once again God sees your motives—if you are fasting with pure motives, He will reward you bless you!