

# The Spiritual Discipline of Secret Prayer

## Introduction (5 minutes)

This study explores Jesus's teaching on prayer from Matthew 6:5-15, examining how authentic prayer happens in secret places where we meet our Father, not to be seen by others but to be in God's presence.

**Central Thesis:** Prayer is predicated on relationship, not transaction. A healthy prayer life requires discipline and intentionality, but the reward is being in the presence of your Father who is always waiting in the secret place.

### **Opening Illustration:** The Concert Ticket Question

The average concert ticket price last year was nearly \$100—over \$96 per ticket.

**The question:** Why would anyone spend a couple hundred dollars to go to a concert and hear songs sung once when they could buy the album on iTunes for \$9.99 and listen as many times as they wanted?

**The answer:** When you enjoy someone, you want to be in their presence. It's all about presence. You want to be in the same room with those people. You want to be there with them.

**When we love someone:** A celebrity, a singer, a band, a family member—we would pay hundreds of dollars, maybe thousands, and drive hundreds of miles just to be in their presence.

**The real question:** How much would you pay to be in the presence of God?

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## I. What Would You Pay for God's Presence? (10 minutes)

### A. The Value Question

**How much would you pay:** To be in the presence of God?

**If you could just be in the same room with God:**

- For just a few minutes
- To be in the same room with God
- To have God's undivided attention

**Would you pay:**

- \$100 to be in the presence of God?
- \$1,000 to be in the presence of God?

### B. The Truth About Cost

**Of course we know the answer:** Yes, we would love to be in God's presence

**We know that:**

- We can be in God's presence

- It doesn't cost money to be in God's presence

**But it does cost something:** To be in God's presence

**What it costs:**

- Intentionality
- Training
- Discipline

**To really be in the presence of God:** It requires something from us

### **C. Is It Worth It?**

**Isn't it worth it?:** In fact, isn't anything hard, anything that's really worth it in life, worth doing?

**If you want to go to a concert:** And you really want to be in their presence, you say "I'm willing to pay that price"

**A great prayer life, a healthy prayer life:** Doesn't just come naturally

### **D. The False Assumption**

**I think there are probably a lot of Christians:** Who struggle with their prayer life

**They think:** For some other people it probably just comes naturally

- They look at the elders
- They look at the ministers
- They look at people in their life
- They say "That person is just super spiritual"
- "I think spirituality just comes so naturally to them"
- "I wish I was like that, but I'm not really like that"
- "It doesn't come naturally to me"

**Listen:** A healthy, vibrant, deep, and rich prayer life doesn't come easy or naturally to anybody.

**A healthy prayer life:**

- A rich prayer life
- A vibrant prayer life

**Requires:** It costs discipline, training, and intentionality

**We have to:**

- Try
- Put in the hard work of being in the presence of God

**But oh how worth it it is:** It's not a chore—it's joy to:

- Be in the same room with God

- Be in the presence of God
- Have the undivided attention of God
- Know that God is listening to you
- Have an audience with God
- Not just to be the audience for God, but for God to be your audience
- For God to listen to you
- For you to have God's undivided attention

**That is not only possible:** God wants to give you that gift—to allow you to come into His presence

**But it requires:**

- Discipline
- Our effort
- Our intentionality

**That's what this morning's lesson is all about.**

**Discussion Question:** Why do you think we sometimes assume prayer comes naturally to "spiritual people" when it actually requires discipline for everyone?

## **II. Not Like the Hypocrites (10 minutes)**

### **A. The Text (Matthew 6:5-6)**

**Read together:** "And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you."

### **B. Understanding "Hypocrite"**

**The word "hypocrite":** Means an actor

**In fact:** It was the same word used for stage actors in the Greco-Roman world

**These religious hypocrites, these religious actors:** They loved to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners that they may be seen by others

### **C. The Pattern from Matthew 6:1-4**

**Just like the previous section:** Jesus said there are people who would practice righteousness, who would do justice

- Not because they wanted to see justice done
- But because they wanted to be **seen doing** justice

**Do you see the difference?:**

- People who did justice not because they wanted to see justice done
- But because they wanted to be seen doing justice
- They wanted to be seen doing acts of righteousness

#### **D. Praying to Be Seen**

**There are some people:** Who don't really want to pray

**They want to be seen praying:** They don't really want to:

- Enter into the presence of God
- Have conversation with God
- Lay out their heart to their Father

**They want to be seen:**

- Praying
- As religious
- As pious

**Jesus says:** "Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward"

#### **E. You Get What You're Seeking**

**You get what you're seeking in prayer:** You get what you're seeking

**If you're seeking:**

- Attention
- Accolades
- To be seen
- For people to say "Wow, what a really religious person that is"
- "What a really spiritual person that is"
- "Look at their great spirituality"
- "Look at how pious they are"
- "Listen to that great prayer that person prayed"

**If that's what you're seeking:** That's what you'll get, and that's all you'll get

**That will be the extent of your reward:** And that reward is not very great

**But that's exactly what they were seeking.**

#### **F. Our Honesty**

**If we're honest:** There are some times in our lives where we're really not interested in being spiritual people

**We're interested in:** Being seen as spiritual people

**Jesus here isn't saying:** That our prayers should never be public

**He's not saying:** Don't ever lead public prayer

**He's saying:** Don't lead public prayer **in order to** be seen leading public prayer

**Don't pray in order to be seen:** Just as we talked about last week—give to the poor, but don't do it so that other people see you giving to the poor

**Discussion Question:** In what ways might we be tempted to pray "to be seen" rather than to actually be with God?

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### **III. Pray to Your Father (15 minutes)**

#### **A. Go Into Your Room (v. 6)**

**"But when you pray":** Go into your room and shut the door

**And pray to your Father:** Who is in secret

**And your Father who sees in secret will reward you**

#### **B. Pray to Your Father**

**I want to walk through this verse:** "Pray to your..."—pray to your what?

**Pray to your Father.**

**Prayer is predicated on relationship:** Prayer is predicated on relationship

#### **C. Uncomfortable with "Relationship"?**

**I know sometimes:** Maybe that word "relationship" when we're talking about spirituality, about God, makes us a little uncomfortable

**When we talk about having a relationship with God:**

- What does that mean?
- What does that entail?
- What does that look like?

**We're sometimes more comfortable:** Speaking about our interaction with God as if it was a **transaction**

**As if God was some sort of vending machine:**

- Where we put a quarter in and we get a Coke out
- Where we say our prayer and God gives us what we want

**But that's not the way prayer works:** Prayer isn't a transaction—it's a relationship

- It's relational
- It's familial

**Prayer is predicated on relationship.**

### **D. Know the One to Whom You're Speaking**

**You will never have a healthy prayer life:** Until you know the one to whom you're speaking

**In fact:** It's not so much about what you say—it's about the one to whom you're saying it

**I think sometimes with prayer:** We get so caught up:

- What do I say?
- How do I say that?
- How do I pray that?
- How do I articulate what I'm saying and feeling and wanting and needing?

**I think sometimes you have to remember:** It's not as much what you say as it is **to whom** you're saying it

### **E. Not Just "God" Generically**

**Jesus doesn't say here:** That you're praying to God generically

**God is very generic:** Do you ever notice that even somewhat secular people don't mind talking about:

- God
- A higher power
- A higher being
- Some Creator

**As if it's just some deity:** That maybe set everything in motion in the beginning and then just kind of went about his business and lets us go about our business

**But that's not the sort of relationship:** That Jesus is encouraging His disciples to have with Yahweh

### **F. A Familial Relationship**

**The relationship Jesus is helping His disciples have:** With Yahweh is:

- A familial relationship
- A Father-child relationship

**So when you pray:** You must remember that you're praying to your Father:

- Who loves you
- Who cares about you

### **G. Don't Let Earthly Fathers Cloud Your View**

**Sometimes I'm afraid:** We allow our relationship with our earthly father to influence and sometimes cloud how we think about our Heavenly Father

**Sometimes:**

- Those who had very strained or difficult relationships
- People who have very abusive relationships with their family or parent
- That clouds their perception of who God is

**God is not the projection of your earthly father:** He is your perfect Heavenly Father

**Whether or not your earthly father:**

- Loved you or loves you
- Was kind and merciful and loving towards you

**Your Heavenly Father:**

- Loves you
- Cares about you
- Wants to hear from you
- Wants you to be in His presence
- Wants to spend time with you

**Isn't that an amazing thing?:** That the God of the universe, the Creator of all things, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords—this God:

- Wants to spend time with you
- Wants you to think of Him as your Father

**Discussion Question:** How does understanding God as "Father" change the way you approach prayer?

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## **IV. Your Father Is in Secret (10 minutes)**

### **A. The Phrase That Stuck**

**This phrase has been sticking in my head all week:** "Pray to your Father who is in secret"

**In a second he'll say:** "He sees in secret"

**But here he says:** "Your Father is in secret"

### **B. The Obvious Meaning**

**There's a sense in which that's automatically, obviously true:**

- You can't see Him
- He's in secret
- He's in the hidden place
- He's in heaven

## **C. The Deeper Meaning**

**But Jesus is encouraging His disciples:** To go into a secret place

- He says "Go into your room"
- The word there means your inner room, like your closet
- "Shut the door"
- Go into a secret place

**And your Father who is in secret:** See, I think that's exactly what Jesus is saying

**That secret room, that secret place:**

- That closet with the door closed—your Father is there
- That back porch first thing in the morning with a cup of coffee—your Father is there
- That time alone, wherever that is—taking a walk, sitting on an empty bench in an empty park—your Father is there

**He is in secret.**

## **D. Remember Two Things**

**Remember when you're praying:** You're speaking to your Father

**Remember when you go into a secret place:** Where you're intentional

- Because it requires intentionality
- It's not about habit
- It's not just about doing things out of ritual, ceremony, or because you've always done them that way
- It's not just about saying a prayer before you eat a meal (not knocking that—that's a good thing to do, we should thank God every moment)

**But there needs to be:** Some personal, one-on-one, intentional, discipline time where:

- We go to a secret place
- We close the door
- We go outside
- We sit on a quiet bench where no one else is around
- Nobody else can hear us
- Nobody else can see us

**He says:** Your Father's there. Your Father's there. He's there in that secret place. He's waiting for you.

## **E. Your Father Sees in Secret and Will Reward You**

**"And your Father who sees in secret will reward you":**

**Again, as we said last week:** I don't think He means an eternal reward (even though that might be part of it)

**I think the reward is the same way:** Those who pray in order to be seen by people—they get what they're seeking

**You get what you're seeking in prayer:**

- If you're seeking an audience that will applaud you for being so spiritual and saying such great prayers—you'll get that, and that's all you'll get
- But if you're seeking the presence of your Father—you'll get that

**You'll get that if you're willing to:**

- Invest the time
- Be intentional
- Be disciplined
- Say "You know what, this is time for my Father"
- "This is time for my prayer"
- "I'm going to shut off my phone"
- "I'm going to shut off the TV"
- "I'm going to step outside or go into my inner room"
- "I'm going to close the door"
- "I'm going to spend time with my Father"
- "Because I love my Father"
- "And I love spending time with Him"
- "And I love being in His presence"

**Jesus says:** He will see you and He will reward you

**You will get what you're seeking.**

## **F. Connection to the Beatitudes**

**Isn't this how He began the Sermon on the Mount?:**

- "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled"
- "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted"

**He will reward you:** You will get what you're seeking in prayer

- If you're seeking to be seen, you'll probably get that
- But if you're seeking to simply be in the presence of God, to be in the presence of your Father—you will for sure get that

## **G. What Are You Willing to Do?**

**If you would be willing:**

- To spend \$100 or \$200
- To drive several hundred miles
- To see somebody famous or somebody you really liked
- Or maybe even just a family member you haven't seen in a while

**What are you willing to do to be in the presence of your Father?:**

- Would you be willing to shut off your phone?
- Would you be willing to turn off the radio?
- Would you be willing to turn off the TV?
- Would you be willing to step aside?
- Would you be willing to go into an inner room?
- Would you be willing to shut the door?
- Just to be in the presence of your Father?

**Jesus says:** He's there, and He sees you, and He will reward you—to go into that secret place and speak with your Father

**Discussion Question:** What distractions keep you from finding that secret place of prayer?

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## **V. Don't Heap Up Empty Phrases (5 minutes)**

### **A. The Text (Matthew 6:7-8)**

**Read together:** "And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him."

### **B. Two Types of False Prayer**

**Jesus says:**

1. There are some people who are **hypocrites** who stand out on the street corner or go into the synagogue and pray so they can be seen by other people
2. Then there are the **Gentiles** who think that by babbling on and on, saying so many words, they'll get the attention of their God and their God will finally be convinced to care about them and their needs

### **C. Praying to Convince God**

**Isn't that still the case?:** There are still some times where we pray and we feel like we're praying in order to convince God to care

**That's how the Gentiles pray:** The Gentiles think they have to convince God to care

**They think they're going to be heard:** Because they pray enough words

- If I pray enough words
- If I shout loud enough
- If I do enough (remember the prophets of Baal?)
- Then maybe, perhaps, I can convince my God to care about my needs

#### **D. Your Father Already Knows**

**Jesus says:** Your Father already knows what you need even before you ask Him

**Prayer is predicated on relationship:** Our prayer life is founded on, based in, anchored in our relationship with God

**We don't pray in order to convince God to care:** We pray because we know that He already does

**You don't have to convince God to care about your needs:**

- He already knows your needs
- He already cares

**We don't pray in order to convince God to care about our needs:** We pray because we know He does care about our needs

**We pray because we know:** He is our Father

#### **E. Not Transactional, But Relational**

**This isn't transactional:** Jesus doesn't give us legal terms

**Isn't that how we sometimes approach religion?:** We approach religion in terms of legalese—like we're lawyers trying to figure out how to navigate the law

**Jesus says it's not like that:** It's relational

**He's your Father:** So talk to Him

- Not trying to impress people by how pious you are, how often you pray, or how beautifully you pray
- Not trying to convince Him to listen to you by saying enough words
- But speak to Him the way you speak to your Father
- Knowing, convinced, absolutely convinced that He knows you and cares about you even before you ask

**You do not have to convince God to care about your needs:** You pray because you're already convinced He knows your needs

**Discussion Question:** How does knowing that God already knows your needs change the way you pray?

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## **VI. The Lord's Prayer: Personal with Collective Implications (10 minutes)**

### **A. The Text (Matthew 6:9-13)**

**Read together:** "Pray then like this: Our Father 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 lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

### **B. Personal Prayer with Collective Language**

**Even though this is a very personal prayer:** Jesus is speaking about personal prayer life

- Your personal prayer life needs to be far more robust than your public prayer life
- You need to have a personal prayer life that is deep, rich, robust
- That is a reward in and of itself

**But even though He's talking about personal prayer:** That requires personal discipline in your personal conversation with God

- It still has **collective implications** and **collective benefits**

### **C. The "Our" Language**

**You don't just pray to your Father in heaven:** You pray to **our** Father in heaven

**You don't just pray for your daily bread:** You pray for **our** daily bread

**You don't just pray for your forgiveness:** You pray for **our** forgiveness

**You don't just pray for you to be delivered:** You pray for **us** to be delivered

- For **us** to be forgiven

### **D. Still Part of a Family**

**When we go to God in prayer:** We're still part of a family

**And that changes the way we pray:** But it also changes the benefits of our prayer life

**I am dependent on your prayer life:** Do you stop and think about that?

- I am dependent on your prayer life
- You are dependent on my prayer life

**We as a collective body of Christians:** Are dependent on each other's prayer life

### **E. Personal Discipline with Collective Impact**

**This isn't just about your personal relationship with God:** It's about your personal discipline to have your personal relationship with God

**But that also impacts me:** And my relationship with God impacts you

**Because:**

- We are part of the same body
- We are members of one body
- We belong to each other

**Our prayer life:** Even our personal prayer life, even our most private prayer life, even our secret prayer life has **collective implications** and **collective benefits**

**We're praying:**

- With each other
- For each other
- Even when we're all alone

**Discussion Question:** How does understanding that your personal prayer life affects others change your motivation to pray?

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## VII. Prayer Transforms Our Wants (5 minutes)

### A. The Key Insight

**Disciplined prayer isn't just about:**

- The revealing of our needs
- But also the **transforming of our wants**

**Disciplined prayer isn't just about revealing our needs:** It's about transforming our wants

### B. What We Want vs. What We Should Want

**Listen:** If we took seriously Jesus's prayer here, we would go:

- From wanting **the world** (because that's what we want—we want fame and fortune, we want the world)
- To wanting **God's will to be done in the world**

**We'd go from:**

- Wanting fame and fortune
- To wanting **our daily bread**

**We'd go from:**

- Wanting **revenge**
- To wanting **forgiveness**

**We'd go from:**

- Wanting our honor, our glory, our kingdom
- To wanting **God's kingdom**

## C. Prayer as Transformation

**Prayer isn't just about:** Revealing our needs to God (God already knows your needs)

**It's about transforming your wants:** It's not just going to God and saying:

- "God, I want this and I want this and I want this"
- "I need this and I need this and I need this"

**It's about:** You and I working on our relationship with our Father

**And allowing that process of prayer to be:** Where I lay out my heart, I lay out my wants, I lay out my needs

**But I also allow Him to:**

- Shape my wants
- Transform my wants

**So that instead of:**

- Wanting the world → I want His will to be done in the world
- Wanting a fortune → I want daily bread
- Wanting my enemies to get what's coming to them → I just want to experience the same forgiveness that I've already given to my enemies

**Discussion Question:** What "wants" in your life need to be transformed through prayer?

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## VIII. Relationships with Others and God Are Linked (5 minutes)

### A. The Crucial Text (Matthew 6:14-15)

**Read together:** "For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

### B. Inseparably Linked

**Your relationship with others:** And your relationship with God are inseparably linked

**I'll say that again:** Your relationship with other people and your relationship with God are inseparably linked

**The better you love God:** The better you'll love others

**The better you love others:** The better you'll love God

**And you cannot have a healthy relationship with God:** If you have unhealthy relationships with others

### C. A Hard Word

**I know that's tough to hear:** It's a lot to take in

**Let me say it again:** You cannot have a healthy relationship with God and unhealthy relationships with others

**Listen to what He says:** "If you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you don't forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

**Your relationships with other people and your relationship with God are inseparably linked.**

## **D. Every Human Being**

**Every human being:**

- With whom you come into contact
- You hear about
- You see on the news
- You interact with on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or whatever social media you're on
- You pass on the freeway or tollway
- **Every human being** is an image-bearer of God

**Every human is made in the image of God:**

**And you cannot have a healthy relationship with your Father:** If you do not have a healthy relationship with:

- Your brothers and sisters
- Your neighbors
- Even with those who've done you wrong

## **E. It's Both**

**Jesus says it's both:** See, we have this way of thinking that's like:

- "Now I got my relationship with God and that's all good and fine"
- "I don't get along with people very well"
- "But me and God, we've got a special thing going"

**Jesus says it doesn't work like that:** They're inseparably linked

**So your prayer life and your relationship with your neighbors and brothers and sisters:**  
They are inseparably linked

**And it takes discipline, doesn't it?:** Because:

- The better you get at loving your neighbors, the better relationship you can have with God
- The more you love God, the better you can love your neighbors

**So it's both:** And it requires:

- Intentionality
- Training
- Discipline
- "You know what, I messed up yesterday, but I'm going to work on it today"
- "I'm going to strive"

**Why?:** Because I love my Father

- I want to experience His forgiveness
- I want to experience His presence

**Do you want to experience the presence of God eternally?:** Yes, that too

**But now, right now:** You can experience the presence of God

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## **IX. When You Find a Secret Place (5 minutes)**

### **A. The Rhyme to Remember**

**I hope you'll forgive me:** I know this is a little bit corny because it rhymes, but I want us to remember it:

**When you find a secret place of prayer, you will always find your Father there.**

### **B. The Encouragement**

**Isn't that encouraging to know?:** If you find a secret place of prayer and you decide:

- Intentionally
- In a disciplined way
- "I'm going to spend time with my Father"

**You find a secret place of prayer:** You will always find your Father there

**He is:**

- In secret
- He sees in secret
- He will reward you

**He'll reward you:** And I think He rewards you with His presence—now and forever

### **C. What Matters Most**

**I would hate it:** If being in the presence of:

- My family
- A celebrity

- A singer
- A band

**If that meant more to me:** Than being in the presence of my Heavenly Father

**He's as close as:**

- Your closet
- Your back porch
- Anywhere you set aside

**God is everywhere, of course:** But if you really want to spend time with Him and be in His presence, it's going to require you being intentional

**Jesus says:** "Go into your inner room and shut the door, and your Father who is in secret will see in secret and reward you"

**When you find a secret place of prayer, you will always find your Father there.**

## **D. The Example of James**

**I'm reminded of a story:** About the brother of Jesus, James

**Later generations of Christians would report:** That James was so fervent in prayer that:

- He went to the temple every day
- Would spend so much time in prayer
- That his knees became calloused and hard like a camel's

**Some people say:** They called him "Old Camel Knees" or "Camel Knees James" because his knees were so calloused and hard from spending so much time in prayer

**Can you imagine?:** Spending so much time on your knees that your knees actually became hard and calloused

**But what a reward:** To have spent that much time in the presence of his Father

**That is the reward.**

**If you can find a secret place of prayer, you will always find your Father there.**

**What an amazing promise that is.**

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## **Closing (5 minutes)**

### **A. You're Not Alone in This**

**I know some of us don't feel like we're very good at prayer:** Maybe you feel like that's for someone else, someone more spiritual than you

**Don't judge somebody's spirituality:** By what you've seen on a Sunday morning or Wednesday night

**Don't think that for anybody prayer just comes naturally or easily:** For all of us, it requires discipline and intentionality

**It doesn't matter:**

- What happened yesterday or last week
- If the last time you tried to pray you couldn't find the right words

**Because it's not really so much about what you say:** But about the one to whom you're saying it

**Your Father is as close as a secret place:** If you just find a place to be still and quiet, you will guaranteed find your Father there

## **B. We're Connected**

**But remember too:** You're not in this alone

**Your prayer life, my prayer life, your life, my life:** We're all connected

**We're all in this together:** If you're struggling:

- With your prayer life
- With your walk with the Lord
- With anything

**We are here for you:** And we want to help you any way that we can

**Because:**

- Your problems and your burdens are our problems and our burdens
- Because we're in this together
- We are one family
- We are connected
- We belong to each other

**So let's be:**

- Praying for each other
- Praying with each other
- Helping each other
- Today and every day

## **Discussion Questions (Choose 3-4 for your context)**

1. What would you be willing to pay or sacrifice to spend time in the presence of God? What does your answer reveal?

2. In what ways are you tempted to pray "to be seen" rather than truly seeking God's presence?
  3. How does understanding prayer as "relational" rather than "transactional" change the way you approach it?
  4. What does it mean practically that "your Father is in secret" and waiting for you in the secret place?
  5. Why do you think Jesus emphasizes that God already knows what you need before you ask? How should that affect your prayers?
  6. How has prayer transformed your "wants" over time? What "wants" still need transforming?
  7. Why are our relationships with others and our relationship with God "inseparably linked"? How have you seen this connection in your own life?
  8. What specific steps can you take this week to find your "secret place of prayer"?
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## Key Scriptures for Reference

- **Matthew 6:5-15** - Jesus's teaching on prayer
  - **James 1:5-8** - Asking God in faith
  - **1 Thessalonians 5:17** - "Pray without ceasing"
  - **Philippians 4:6-7** - "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God"
  - **1 John 5:14-15** - Confidence in prayer
  - **Psalms 46:10** - "Be still, and know that I am God"
  - **Mark 1:35** - Jesus's example of early morning prayer in solitary places
  - **Luke 5:16** - "But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray"
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## Summary: Core Truths to Remember

1. **Prayer costs something** - Not money, but intentionality, training, and discipline
2. **Prayer doesn't come naturally** - Even to "spiritual people"; everyone must work at it
3. **Don't pray to be seen** - Pray to actually be with your Father
4. **Prayer is relational, not transactional** - It's about relationship with Father, not vending machine with God
5. **Your Father is in secret** - He's waiting in the secret place (closet, back porch, quiet bench)
6. **You get what you seek** - Seek approval, you'll get it; seek God's presence, you'll get that

7. **God already knows** - You don't pray to convince God to care; you pray because He already does
8. **Personal with collective impact** - "Our Father," "our bread," "our forgiveness"—your prayer life affects the whole body
9. **Prayer transforms wants** - From wanting the world to wanting God's will; from fortune to daily bread; from revenge to forgiveness
10. **Relationships are linked** - You cannot have healthy relationship with God and unhealthy relationships with others
11. **The promise to remember** - When you find a secret place of prayer, you will always find your Father there

**The Bottom Line:** Find a secret place this week. Shut the door. Turn off distractions. Be still. Your Father is there, waiting, knowing your needs before you speak. This takes discipline, but the reward is His presence—now and forever. When you find a secret place of prayer, you will always find your Father there.