

# Dr. Bill Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 10, Matthew 6:1ff, Works of Piety, Prayer Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

## 1. Abstract of Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 10, Matthew 6:1ff, Works of Piety, Prayer, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Bill Mounce examines the biblical passage of Matthew 6:1-13, focusing on Jesus' teachings about prayer within the Sermon on the Mount. **Mounce clarifies that the reward for pious acts is God's approval and emphasizes the importance of authentic prayer directed towards God, not for human recognition.** He analyzes the Lord's Prayer, highlighting that its initial imperatives call upon God to act, specifically regarding the hallowing of His name, the coming of His kingdom, and the execution of His will on earth as it is in heaven. **Mounce stresses that these petitions are interconnected and should reflect a desire for God's holiness and rule to be manifested through believers and the church.** He cautions against meaningless repetition in prayer and advocates for a view of God that encompasses both imminence and transcendence. **Ultimately, the lecture encourages a deeper understanding of prayer as communion with God and a reflection of His character in the lives of believers.**

**2. 14 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 10 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Gospels → Sermon on the Mount).**



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### 3. Briefing Document: Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 10, Matthew 6:1ff, Works of Piety, Prayer

#### Briefing Document: Dr. Bill Mounce on Matthew 6:1ff - Works of Piety, Prayer

**Overview:** This lecture by Dr. Bill Mounce delves into Jesus' teachings on prayer in Matthew 6:5-15, within the broader context of "Works of Piety." Mounce emphasizes the importance of sincerity and authenticity in prayer, contrasting it with hypocritical displays and vain repetitions. He also provides a detailed examination of the Lord's Prayer, focusing on its structure, themes, and the meaning of its individual petitions, particularly the opening section addressing God.

#### Main Themes and Important Ideas/Facts:

##### 1. The Nature of True Reward:

- Mounce clarifies his previous point on reward, stating that the ultimate reward he seeks is to hear the Lord say, **"well done, good and faithful servant."** He contrasts this with seeking the praise of people.
- He views the joy of providing free education through Biblical Training as a present reward, but the eternal affirmation from God is paramount.

##### 2. Expanding the Understanding of Fasting (Brief Mention):

- While primarily focused on prayer, Mounce briefly touches on fasting, acknowledging that it can extend beyond abstaining from food to include things like **"fasting from consumerism."**
- He references Isaiah 58, which speaks against fasting that coexists with exploitation and injustice, highlighting that true fasting involves more than just outward deprivation.

##### 3. Authentic vs. Hypocritical Prayer (Matthew 6:5-6):

- Jesus condemns praying publicly **"to be seen by others,"** like the hypocrites who pray standing in synagogues and on street corners. Their reward is the attention they receive from people (**"Truly, I tell you, they have received their full reward."**).
- Jesus instructs his followers to **"go into your room, close the door, and pray to your Father who is unseen."** The reward for such private and sincere prayer comes from the Father who **"sees what is done in secret."**

- Mounce clarifies that Jesus is not prohibiting public prayer altogether, as evidenced by Jesus himself, Paul, and the early church praying publicly. The issue is the *motivation* behind the prayer and the desired audience.

#### 4. The Core Problem: Audience and Motivation in Prayer:

- The central issue is **"Why do you pray, and to whom? Who is your audience? Whose praise do you desire?"**
- Hypocritical prayer is addressed to humans to draw attention and praise, while authentic prayer is **"simply, authentic prayer is speaking to God."**
- Mounce criticizes preachers who adopt a distinct "preacher's voice" during prayer, as it draws attention to the one praying rather than to God.

#### 5. The Corrective: Authentic Private Prayer:

- Mounce believes **"the best corrective to hypocritical public prayer is authentic private prayer."** Public prayer should naturally flow from a genuine and ongoing private prayer life.
- He shares his personal practice of starting prayer routines before leading public worship to ensure his public prayers are an **"outflowing of what had been happening in that room for the past several days."**

#### 6. The Reward of Authentic Prayer:

- The greatest reward of prayer is **"communion with God,"** an ever-increasing awareness of living in relationship with the Heavenly Father.
- Another reward is **"answered prayer,"** acknowledging that God responds to prayer, although His answers may not always be what we expect.
- Mounce highlights the complexity of **"unanswered prayer"** as a significant issue.

#### 7. Prayer and the Character of God (Matthew 6:7-8):

- **"Your prayers and my prayers truly show our view of God."** How we pray reflects our understanding of God's nature.
- Jesus warns against **"keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words."**
- God **"knows what you need before you ask Him,"** so prayer should not be about coercing Him with excessive words.

## 8. Meaningless Repetitions and "Vain Repetitions":

- Jesus uses the made-up Greek word "**batalogeo**," an onomatopoeic word representing meaningless, repetitive sounds ("**blah-blah-blah-blah-blah**").
- This is contrasted with the practices of some mystery religions that used lengthy incantations, which upon closer examination, were often just meaningless sounds.
- The issue is not the length of the prayer itself (as Jesus prayed at length in John 17), but the "**meaningless words repeated over and over and over again**."
- Mounce points out the irony of the Lord's Prayer itself sometimes becoming a "**constantly repeated bunch of meaningless words**," signifying a "**very defective view of God**."
- Vain repetition suggests a lack of belief that God cares and will watch over us.

## 9. The Lord's Prayer as a Pattern (Matthew 6:9-15):

- Jesus introduces the Lord's Prayer with "**This, then, is how you should pray**," emphasizing it as a **pattern to be emulated** rather than just words to be repeated (though memorizing it is still valuable).
- The important aspects are the "**themes and the structure of the prayer**."

## 10. Structure and Themes of the Lord's Prayer:

- **Orientation to God (Our Father in heaven):** This opening phrase serves to remind us "**who are we praying to?**"
- **"Our":** Emphasizes corporate prayer (though individual prayer using "my Father" is appropriate).
- **"Father":** Reflects the **imminence of God**, His closeness, approachability, care, and deep love for His creation. This was a revolutionary way to address God for individual Jews.
- **"in heaven":** Emphasizes God's **transcendence**, His being far above, greater than, and independent of creation. This balances the imminence of "Father."
- Asking is an expression of our dependence on God and trust in His wisdom, even though He is omniscient and knows our needs.

- **Praising God (Hallowed be your name):** Biblical prayer typically begins with praising God, which is "**declaring who He is and what He has done.**"
- **Petition (May your kingdom come, May your will be done, Give us today our daily bread, Forgive us our debts, Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one):** Petition focuses on admitting our dependence on God for all things: forgiveness, sustenance, and spiritual protection. Prayer never ultimately focuses on us but on God.

#### 11. The Imperative Nature of the Petitions:

- All the verbs in the Lord's Prayer are **imperatives**, meaning we are "**calling on God to act.**"
- Mounce believes many people are unaware of this when they pray the prayer.

#### 12. "Hallowed be your name":

- Mounce considers "**hallowed be your name**" the "**worst single translation in the entire Bible**" because the word "hallowed" is archaic and largely meaningless to contemporary audiences (especially those under 40-50).
- The word means "**holy,**" "**to make holy,**" "**to consecrate,**" "**to treat as sacred.**"
- A better translation would be "**May your name be treated as holy**" or "**May your name be honored.**"
- "God's name" refers to "**everything that the person is,**" all of God's character, activities, and attributes.
- The petition is a passive imperative: "**May you be known for who you truly are.**" We are praying that God would act in such a way that He is seen and treated as holy.
- This starts with the individual: "**God, please move through me. Please act within me. In that, the words that I use and the life that I live are an accurate declaration of the holiness and the perfection of God.**"
- It also applies to the community of believers (the church): "**God, may the activities and the attitudes and the love and all the things that make up proper community life in the church, may the life of this church be a declaration of your holiness and your reverence and your sanctity.**"

- The phrase "**on earth as it is in heaven**" likely modifies all three preceding imperatives (hallowing God's name, the coming of His kingdom, and His will being done), signifying a desire for these to be realized on earth with the same perfection they have in heaven.

### 13. "Your kingdom come":

- The kingdom is primarily the "**sovereign rule of God in the hearts and lives of His children,**" not primarily a place.
- Mounce considers the kingdom in three time frames: past (victory on the cross), present (God ruling in our lives), and future (consummation at Christ's return).
- Praying "May your kingdom come" means asking God that His sovereign rule would pervade our lives as perfectly as it does in heaven and spread through us to others.

### 14. "Your will be done":

- A common question is "**What is God's will?**"
- Mounce points to 1 Thessalonians 4:3: "**This is the will of God, your sanctification.**"
- God's will largely involves our growth, sanctification, our character aligning with Jesus', and then acting in accordance with that character.
- Praying "May your will be done" is asking for God's will of growth and moral perfection to begin in us and then spread to those around us.
- In heaven, God's will is done spontaneously and joyously, with a full understanding of His ways. We pray for this same reality on earth, even amidst current struggles.

**15. Interconnectedness of the First Three Petitions:**

- The hallowing of God's name, the coming of His kingdom, and the submission to His will are intricately tied together.
- They can be seen as three different sides of the same coin, looking at the same reality from different standpoints: how God is viewed, how people submit to His rule, and how people understand His will.

**Conclusion:**

Dr. Mounce's lecture provides a rich understanding of Jesus' teachings on prayer, emphasizing authenticity, proper motivation, and a deep understanding of God's character. His detailed examination of the Lord's Prayer encourages a thoughtful and meaningful engagement with this foundational prayer, moving beyond rote repetition to a genuine desire for God's name to be honored, His kingdom to come, and His will to be done in our lives and in the world.

## 4. Study Guide: Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 10, Matthew 6:1ff, Works of Piety, Prayer

### Study Guide: Matthew 6:1ff - Works of Piety, Prayer (Mounce Lecture 10)

#### I. Core Concepts

- **Reward:** Understand Dr. Mounce's clarification on the ultimate reward being "well done, good and faithful servant" from the Lord, rather than earthly praise.
- **Authentic vs. Hypocritical Piety:** Differentiate between outward acts of piety performed for human recognition and those motivated by a genuine desire to honor God. This applies to giving (covered in previous lectures), fasting, and prayer.
- **Purpose of Prayer:** Recognize that the primary purpose of prayer is communication with God, not to impress others or manipulate Him through eloquent or repetitive words.
- **Jesus' Teaching on Prayer (Matthew 6:5-6):** Understand that Jesus is not condemning public prayer, but rather the hypocritical motivation of praying for the sake of being seen and praised by others. The emphasis is on the audience of prayer: is it God or humanity?
- **The Corrective to Hypocritical Prayer:** Grasp the idea that authentic private prayer is the best antidote to hypocritical public prayer, with public prayer being an outflow of one's personal communion with God.
- **Prayer and the Character of God (Matthew 6:7-8):** Recognize that the way we pray reflects our understanding of God's character. Avoid babbling and vain repetitions, as God already knows our needs.
- **Meaning of "Batalogeo":** Understand the onomatopoetic nature of this Greek word coined by Jesus to describe meaningless, repetitive babbling in prayer, similar to pagan incantations.
- **The Lord's Prayer as a Pattern (Matthew 6:9-13):** Understand that in Matthew, the Lord's Prayer is presented primarily as a model or structure for prayer, emphasizing key themes and their order, rather than simply words to be repeated verbatim.



- **Orienting Ourselves to God ("Our Father in heaven"):** Analyze the significance of this opening phrase, highlighting God's imminence (closeness, approachability as "Father," "Abba") and transcendence (majesty, power as being "in heaven").
- **The Imperatives of the Lord's Prayer:** Recognize that the verbs in the initial petitions of the Lord's Prayer are imperatives, signifying a calling upon God to act.
- **"Hallowed be your name":** Understand that "hallowed" means holy or to be treated as holy. The prayer is a petition for God's name (representing all that He is) to be regarded with reverence and not treated as ordinary, both in our individual lives and within the church community.
- **"Your kingdom come":** Understand that God's kingdom is not merely a place but primarily His sovereign rule in the hearts and lives of His children, with past (victory on the cross), present (His reign in our lives), and future (consummation at Christ's return) aspects. This petition asks for God's rule to pervade our lives and spread to others.
- **"Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven":** Understand that God's will, in large part, pertains to our sanctification, our growth in Christ-like character and behavior. This petition asks for God's will to be accomplished in our lives and on earth in the same way it is perfectly fulfilled in heaven.
- **Interconnectedness of the First Three Petitions:** Recognize the close relationship between the hallowing of God's name, the coming of His kingdom, and the doing of His will. They are different facets of the same reality.

## II. Quiz

1. According to Dr. Mounce, what is the ultimate reward believers should be seeking? Why is this more significant than earthly praise?
2. Explain the key difference between hypocritical prayer and authentic prayer as described in the lecture. What is the primary motivation behind each?
3. In Matthew 6:5-6, what is Jesus not prohibiting regarding prayer? What is the central issue He is addressing in these verses?
4. What does Dr. Mounce suggest is the best way to counteract hypocritical public prayer? How should our public prayers ideally relate to our private prayer life?
5. Explain why Jesus uses the made-up Greek word "batalogeo" in Matthew 6:7. What does this word signify about the kind of prayer Jesus is cautioning against?

6. In the context of Matthew's Gospel, how should we primarily understand the Lord's Prayer? What aspects beyond the specific words are important?
7. What are the two key aspects of God's nature highlighted in the opening phrase "Our Father in heaven"? Briefly explain each aspect.
8. What does it mean that the initial petitions of the Lord's Prayer contain imperatives? What are we essentially doing when we pray these commands (in the form of entreaty) to God?
9. Explain Dr. Mounce's interpretation of the petition "Hallowed be your name." What does "hallowed" mean, and how should this prayer impact our lives and the church?
10. Briefly describe Dr. Mounce's understanding of "Your kingdom come" and "Your will be done." How do these petitions relate to God's rule and our lives on earth?

### **III. Quiz Answer Key**

1. The ultimate reward believers should seek is to hear the Lord say, "well done, good and faithful servant." This is more significant than earthly praise because it is God's affirmation and the true measure of a life lived in obedience and service to Him.
2. Hypocritical prayer is directed towards human beings for the sake of being seen and admired, while authentic prayer is a genuine communication addressed to God. The primary motivation behind hypocritical prayer is to gain human approval, whereas authentic prayer is motivated by a desire for communion with God.
3. Jesus is not prohibiting public prayer in Matthew 6:5-6. The central issue He is addressing is the motivation behind the prayer, specifically when individuals pray ostentatiously in public places solely to be noticed by others.
4. Dr. Mounce suggests that the best corrective to hypocritical public prayer is authentic private prayer. Public prayer should be a natural outflowing and extension of an individual's ongoing personal conversations and relationship with God throughout the week.
5. Jesus uses "batalogeo" (blah-blah-blah) to describe meaningless, repetitive babbling in prayer, similar to the nonsensical incantations used in pagan mystery religions. He cautions against thinking that God can be manipulated or will hear us simply because of the quantity or repetition of empty words.

6. In Matthew's Gospel, the Lord's Prayer should primarily be understood as a pattern or structure for prayer, highlighting essential themes such as orienting to God, praising Him, and petitioning based on His will and kingdom. The ordering and concepts within the prayer are as important as the specific words.
7. The two key aspects are God's imminence and transcendence. Imminence refers to God's closeness, approachability, and familial relationship with us as "Father" (Abba). Transcendence emphasizes God's majesty, power, and being far above and independent of creation, as the one "in heaven."
8. That the verbs are imperatives means we are calling upon God to act in accordance with these petitions. When we pray "Hallowed be your name," "Your kingdom come," and "Your will be done," we are essentially entreating God to bring about these realities in the world and in our lives.
9. Dr. Mounce interprets "Hallowed be your name" as a prayer for God's name, which represents His entire being and character, to be treated as holy and with reverence. This prayer should lead us to live and act in ways that accurately reflect God's holiness, both individually and as the church community.
10. "Your kingdom come" refers to God's sovereign rule being established and expanded in the hearts of individuals and throughout the world, encompassing the present reality of His reign in believers' lives and the future consummation. "Your will be done" largely pertains to our sanctification and growth into Christ-like character, asking for God's purposes to be fulfilled on earth as perfectly as they are in heaven.

#### IV. Essay Format Questions

1. Discuss the implications of understanding the Lord's Prayer in Matthew's Gospel as a pattern rather than simply a formula for repetition. How might this understanding reshape an individual's approach to prayer?
2. Analyze the tension and balance between God's imminence and transcendence as expressed in the opening of the Lord's Prayer ("Our Father in heaven"). Why is it important to understand both aspects of God's character in our prayer life?
3. Evaluate Dr. Mounce's emphasis on authentic private prayer as the foundation for meaningful public prayer. How can individuals cultivate a vibrant private prayer life that informs their participation in corporate prayer?
4. Explore the significance of the imperative verbs in the initial petitions of the Lord's Prayer ("Hallowed be your name," "Your kingdom come," "Your will be done"). How does this grammatical structure shape our understanding of our role and God's sovereignty in prayer?
5. Consider the interconnectedness of the first three petitions of the Lord's Prayer. How does the hallowing of God's name relate to the coming of His kingdom and the doing of His will on earth?

## V. Glossary of Key Terms

- **Piety:** Religious devotion and reverence to God.
- **Hypocrisy:** The practice of claiming to have moral standards or beliefs but behaving in a way that contradicts them. In the context of prayer, it refers to praying for the sake of outward appearance rather than genuine devotion.
- **Authentic Prayer:** Genuine communication with God that is sincere, heartfelt, and directed towards Him as the true audience.
- **Vain Repetition:** The act of repeating words or phrases in prayer meaninglessly, without understanding or sincere intention, often with the belief that the sheer volume of words will influence God.
- **Batalogeo:** A Greek word coined by Jesus, meaning to babble on and on with meaningless repetition, akin to "blah-blah-blah."
- **Imminence (of God):** The theological concept that God is close to and involved with His creation and humanity; His nearness and approachability.
- **Transcendence (of God):** The theological concept that God is infinitely beyond and above His creation, distinct and separate from it in His majesty and power.
- **Imperative (Grammatical):** A verb form that expresses a command or request. In the Lord's Prayer, the initial petitions are grammatically imperatives, though understood as calls upon God to act.
- **Hallowed:** Regarded as holy; revered and respected.
- **Sanctification:** The process of being made holy or set apart for God's purposes; spiritual growth and transformation into Christ-likeness.
- **Kingdom of God:** Primarily God's sovereign rule and reign in the hearts and lives of His people, as well as the sphere where His will is done. It has present and future dimensions.
- **Will of God:** God's desires, purposes, and plans. In the context of personal prayer, it often refers to His will for our growth in holiness and conformity to Christ.
- **Corporate Prayer:** Prayer offered by a group of people together.
- **Individual Prayer:** Prayer offered by a person privately.

## 5. FAQs on Mounce, Sermon on the Mount, Session 10, Matthew 6:1ff, Works of Piety, Prayer, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

### Frequently Asked Questions on Prayer from Matthew 6:1-15

**1. What is the primary concern Jesus addresses regarding prayer in this passage?** Jesus is primarily concerned with the motivation and audience of our prayers. He warns against hypocrisy, where individuals pray publicly to be seen and praised by others, emphasizing that true prayer is directed to God and not for human approval. The core issue is the desire for human recognition rather than genuine communion with God.

**2. How does Jesus contrast hypocritical prayer with authentic prayer?** Hypocritical prayer, according to Jesus, is characterized by a desire to be seen by others, often performed in public places like synagogues and street corners for show. It is a prayer addressed to man, seeking their praise as its full reward. Authentic prayer, conversely, is a private matter, conducted in one's "room" with the door closed, directed to God who sees in secret and will reward accordingly. It stems from a genuine desire to speak with God.

**3. Does Jesus prohibit public prayer in this teaching?** No, Jesus does not prohibit public prayer. The context reveals that Jesus himself, his disciples, and the early church engaged in public prayer. The issue is not the location but the motive. If public prayer is an "outflowing" of an authentic private prayer life and is directed towards God, it is acceptable. The problem arises when the primary purpose of public prayer is to impress others.

**4. What does Dr. Mounce emphasize about the reward of prayer?** Dr. Mounce highlights several aspects of the reward of prayer. Primarily, he believes the ultimate reward is "well done, good and faithful servant" from the Lord. In the context of prayer itself, the greatest reward is communion with God, an ever-increasing awareness of living in relationship with the Heavenly Father. Additionally, answered prayer is another reward, recognizing God's direct responses to our petitions.

**5. What does Jesus mean by telling us not to "keep on babbling like pagans" or use "vain repetitions" in prayer?** Jesus criticizes the practice of using many meaningless words and repeating them in the belief that this will make God more likely to hear and answer. This reflects a pagan belief that incantations and numerous repetitions could coerce the gods. Dr. Mounce explains that Jesus even coined a word, *batalogeo*, resembling the sound of meaningless babbling. The issue is not the length of prayer but the use of empty phrases that do not reflect a genuine understanding of or relationship with God.

**6. How does the Lord's Prayer serve as a guide, according to Dr. Mounce?** In Matthew's account, Dr. Mounce argues that the Lord's Prayer is presented not merely as a set of words to be repeated verbatim, but as a pattern or structure to be emulated in our own prayers. He emphasizes the importance of the themes and the ordering of the prayer: first orienting ourselves to God ("Our Father in heaven"), then praising God ("hallowed be your name"), and finally presenting our petitions. While memorizing and reciting the prayer can be valuable, the deeper meaning lies in understanding and applying its structure and themes to our own communication with God.

**7. What is the significance of the opening phrases of the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father in heaven"?** "Our Father" signifies the imminence of God – his closeness, approachability, and personal care for us as his children. It reflects a revolutionary concept where individuals could address God with familial intimacy. "In heaven" emphasizes God's transcendence – his majesty, glory, power, and independence from creation. This balance reminds us that we approach a God who is both intimately involved in our lives and infinitely greater than us.

**8. What is the nature of the requests in the first part of the Lord's Prayer ("hallowed be your name," "your kingdom come," "your will be done")?** Dr. Mounce points out that the verbs in these initial requests are imperatives, indicating that we are calling on God to act. "Hallowed be your name" is a prayer that God's name (representing all that He is) would be treated as holy and revered, starting with our own lives and extending to the church community. "Your kingdom come" is a prayer for God's sovereign rule to pervade our lives and spread throughout the world. "Your will be done" asks for God's purposes, particularly our sanctification and growth in Christ-like character, to be realized on earth as they are in heaven. These three petitions are closely interconnected, representing different facets of God's glory and reign being manifested on earth.