



“Your God Is Too Distant”

Matthew 6:5-15

BACKGROUND

For the next four weeks, I want to talk about prayer.

No, that’s not true. I don’t want to just talk about prayer. Most of us know that we should pray. Most of us even know how to pray. I’ve even preached on prayer many times.

In this series of messages I want to do more than talk about prayer. When this series comes to an end I want to be a better pray-er than I am today.

I want to begin praying in new ways, with new hopes and dreams, with new faith in Jesus, and with a new confidence that prayer matters.

Join me as we take a close look at Jesus’ teaching on prayer in Matthew 6. I’m calling this series “The Secret Place.”

Let’s start praying like we’ve never prayed before.



KNOWING GOD

a) Read **Matthew 6:5-15**. What does Jesus teach us about God in this passage?

b) Read **Matthew 7:7-12**. How does this passage complement Jesus' teaching about the Father in **chapter 6**?

c) If God is sovereign – that is, if he foreordains everything that comes to pass – why should you pray?



GROWING TOGETHER

a) Why do you think the Lord's Prayer in **vss. 9-13** begins with "Our Father" (rather than "My Father") and often uses the word "us" and "our" instead of "me" and "my"? How ought this to affect the prayer life of your family, small group, or church?

b) In **verse 15**, Jesus says "if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." Explain.



SERVING OTHERS

a) In **verse 5**, Jesus says to his followers, "And *when* [not *if*] you pray...." Similarly, elsewhere in **Matthew 6** he says "*when* you give to the needy" (**vss. 2-3**), and "*when* you fast" (**vss. 16-17**). Jesus assumes that his followers pray, give, and fast. How are you doing in these areas? Where are you weak, and where are you making good progress?

b) Make a list of a few things that the community of East Orlando needs. Take those needs to God in prayer.

c) Now do the same thing for UPC. What are several things we need God to do at our church? Pray about them.
