



TORAH CLUB

WHERE DISCIPLES LEARN



JESUS, My Rabbi

The Life and Teachings
of the Jewish Jesus

LESSON

35

STUDENT WORKBOOK

ACTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

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MATTHEW 6:1-18

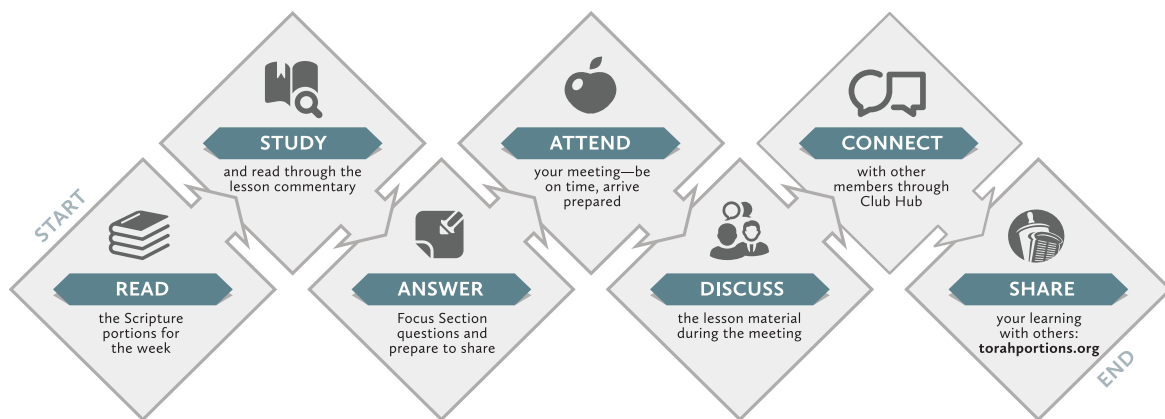
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ACTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

ON THIS JOURNEY: Yeshua, surrounded by His disciples, remains seated on top of a hill overlooking Lake Galilee. As He teaches them, His words cut straight to their very marrow, exposing the difference between true piety and public showmanship. He then teaches His disciples a unique prayer. This short series of seven petitions does not just implore God for one's basic needs; it encompasses the complete and final redemption.

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LESSON 35: ACTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS



READING: MATTHEW 6:1-18

LESSON OVERVIEW

THIS WEEK we continue with our fourth lesson on the Sermon on the Mount. Yeshua points out the hypocrisy that can sully religious piety. The hypocrite is careful to make sure he is seen performing acts of righteousness; he draws as much attention to himself as possible when he gives charitably; he prays ostentatiously on street corners to inflate his spiritual reputations; he mars his appearance when fasting to advertise his asceticism. Yeshua warns His disciples that such men, by receiving adulation in this world for their outward show of devotion, forfeit the corresponding eternal reward. He instructs His followers to conduct themselves in the opposite manner. When they give to the poor, they must give in secret. When they offer personal prayers and petitions to God, they must do so in private. When they fast, they must appear as if they are healthy and fed. In this way, by forfeiting any reward they might receive from others in this world, they secure a reward in the next. Like many other rabbis of His day, Yeshua teaches His disciples a formal liturgical prayer. It consists of seven petitions: the sanctification of God's name, the advent of the kingdom of heaven, the performance of God's will on the earth, provision for one's basic needs, forgiveness of sins, escape from temptation, and deliverance from evil. He instructs His disciples to ask not only for their personal desires but also for the complete redemption and salvation that the world will see only when the kingdom of heaven is fully realized, and the Messianic Era begins.

This lesson of *Jesus, My Rabbi* corresponds to Book 2, pages 503–518 of *Chronicles of the Messiah*.

FOCUS SECTIONS

FOCUS SECTIONS combine mechanical, text derived questions ensuring familiarity with the lesson content and more in-depth group discussion topics.

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PRAYER (HAREINI MEKASHER: I HEREBY JOIN)

I HEREBY JOIN Myself to the Master, Yeshua the Messiah, the righteous one, who is the bread of life, and the true light, the source of eternal salvation for all those who hear Him.

Like a branch that remains in a vine, so may I remain in Him, just as He also remains in the Father and the Father in Him, in order that they may remain in us.

May the grace of the Master, Yeshua the Messiah, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit abound to us.

ACTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

FOCUS
SECTION

1

ACTS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 6:1)

A person who loves God eagerly serves Him with acts of righteousness, fulfilling His commandments as expressions of that love. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3). However, Yeshua warned His disciples not to make a show out of their acts of righteousness. He wanted them to focus their efforts on the love of God, not the love of attention.

Yeshua taught His disciples to conduct themselves discreetly and modestly. He warned them against ostentatious displays of piety. Of course, He expected His disciples to be zealous in doing acts of righteousness, but He warned them against doing so with improper motives. If they acted for the sake of social prestige, they would ultimately find their pious behavior to be detrimental to their spiritual health. A man who takes on religious duties and disciplines only for the sake of earning the respect and esteem of men finds no favor from God for his efforts. He is acting only for the sake of the love of men and their praise, not for the love of God.

Yeshua did not want His disciples to behave like hypocrites. In the English language today, we use the word “hypocrisy” to describe a person who publicly advocates a moral standard or code of ethics but privately does not observe it. For example, we think of a hypocrite as someone who only pretends to be pious when in public—a faker. However, that’s not how Yeshua used the word.

When Yeshua scolded people for practicing “hypocrisy,” He had a different shade of meaning in mind. The word “hypocrite” was used by Jews as a loan word from Greek. It referred to an actor or theater performer. When Yeshua spoke of “hypocrites,” He used the word to describe people who loved to conduct a religious performance in front of others. The word did not imply insincerity or a double standard as it does in English today. The “hypocrite” of the Gospels is anyone who performs religious duties for the sake of being admired by others.

Yeshua told His disciples to conduct three specific acts of righteousness privately: charity, prayer, and fasting. Regarding each, He warned his disciples against any kind of showmanship (i.e., hypocrisy). This is not to say that He discouraged giving charity. He often admonished His disciples to give generously. Nor does it mean that He avoided participation in public prayer. He and His disciples regularly participated in the liturgical services of both the synagogue and Temple. Neither does it imply that He discouraged participation in public fast days. We can be certain that Yeshua and His disciples participated in public fast days such as Yom Kippur. Instead, Yeshua's warning against "practicing your righteousness before men" pertained to personal, individual, voluntary fasts, prayers, and financial donations.

Yeshua expected His disciples to fast, pray, and give generously to charity, but He warned them against doing so with improper motives. It is not simply the performance of an act of righteousness in public that is the problem; rather, hypocrisy entails an act carried out with the specific intention that others will see the performance. As a rule, disciples of Yeshua should not draw attention to their religious practices or acts of piety. More than anyone, we should be discreet, modest, and humble in our religious devotion, doing everything only for the sake of God's eyes, not for the sake of what people will think of us.

STUDY QUESTIONS



1. How is Yeshua's use of the word translated as "hypocrite" in this passage different from the common English usage?

2. Is it categorically forbidden to do good in public? Explain your answer.

GROUP DISCUSSION: One might think that giving charity openly is just as beneficial to the recipient as giving privately. Why then does Yeshua draw such a clear line between the two types of giving?

FOCUS
SECTION

2

LEFT HAND, RIGHT HAND

So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

(Matthew 6:2–4)

The Jewish people consider charity to the poor to be such a central act of righteousness that the Hebrew term for “righteousness” is often used synonymously to mean gifts given to the poor. Our Master assumed His disciples would give generously. He did not say “if you give to the poor,” but “when you give to the poor.”

Announcing charity with trumpets simply means giving alms in public—that is, at the donation box, where everyone can see the philanthropist perform the noble deed. Giving charity “in the streets” probably refers to conspicuously distributing alms to beggars. The donations and alms were not the problems; the hypocrisy lay in the dark motive of inflating one’s reputation.

Yeshua told His disciples to do their giving in secret, not even letting their left hand know what the right hand was doing so that they could receive a reward from their Father in heaven. Those who make contributions in public will receive no such reward because their acts of righteousness were never sincere. They have already been recompensed in the form of public admiration.

We can derive an important principle from this passage. Contrary to popular theology, which teaches that a man’s righteous acts are regarded only as filthy rags before the LORD, the Master assumes that sincere acts of righteousness, such as giving alms, do achieve merit with God. The man who gives charity lays up treasure in heaven—that is to say, he merits reward from God. “Will He not render to man according to his work?” (Proverbs 24:12).

Many of the sages of Judaism echoed similar sentiments concerning secret giving. The Talmud praises a man who gives charity in secret, saying, “A man who gives charity in secret is greater than Moses our teacher.” The sages taught that giving charity in secret turned away God’s displeasure with a man, as it says in Proverbs 21:14, “A gift in secret subdues anger.”

The Talmud says that ideally, “a man gives without knowing to whom he gives, and the beggar receives without knowing from whom he receives.” In another passage, it records that Reb Yannai once saw a man giving a *zuz* to a poor man in the marketplace; he said, “It would be better not to have

given him anything rather than to have given to him publicly and shamed him.” Moreover, the Talmud considers “a man who tithes his produce in secret” as worthy of a reward in the World to Come.

STUDY QUESTIONS

FOCUS SECTION 2

1. How might giving alms to a poor person in public actually be detrimental to the recipient?
2. What did the sages indicate would be the reward of giving charity in secret?

GROUP DISCUSSION: The teaching of Yeshua in this passage demonstrates that our good deeds are not all “filthy rags.” In this light, interpret the famous “filthy rags” verse, Isaiah 64:6, in the context of the rest of the chapter.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRAYER

FOCUS SECTION 3

When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:5–6)

Like giving charity, prayer constitutes a fundamental and regular part of Jewish practice. The Master criticized those whose priority in prayer seemed to be nothing more than to be seen by others as pious. He referred to such behavior as hypocrisy.

To understand the context of Yeshua’s criticism, we must distinguish two modes of prayer. Jewish practice enjoins people to pray three times a

day at set times. The times of prayer correspond to the morning and afternoon sacrifice in the Temple and the recitation of the *Sh'ma* in the evening. Prayer at these fixed intervals ideally happens in the context of a liturgical synagogue prayer service, but individuals are permitted to pray through the liturgy at the appropriate time on their own, in private.

Yeshua and His disciples obviously participated in the liturgical prayer services of the Temple and synagogue, and the book of Acts characterizes His disciples as continually in the Temple worshiping God and devoted to “the prayers” (Acts 2:42). Public, liturgical prayer services, however, are not occasions for personal prayer. For this reason, synagogue liturgy is always formulated in the first-person common plural: “Our Father, Our King, Our LORD, Our Savior,” etc.

A second mode of prayer (not necessarily attached to the daily times of prayer) consists of prayer and petition without fixed formula or liturgical pattern—similar to the individualized, extemporaneous manner of prayer familiar to many churches today. Yeshua’s criticisms in this passage apply primarily to this second mode of prayer, not the first. Yeshua’s admonition should not be construed as an indictment against public, liturgical prayer in the synagogue or Temple; rather, He spoke against the extemporaneous prayers of an individual conducted in public. Yeshua’s words do not suggest that all prayers conducted in public forums and houses of worship are disingenuous or publicity-seeking. Rather, He warned against the “hypocrites” who abused places of prayer by using them as stages for pious showmanship.

The Master warned His disciples against making their personal prayers and petitions public. To do so draws attention to oneself and crosses the fine line between piety and pretentiousness. The problem is not the public visibility of a man in prayer, but his desire to be seen by others and perceived as pious.

For purposes of personal prayer, Yeshua told His disciples to “enter into your rooms and close your doors behind you” (Isaiah 26:20), like the Prophet Elisha who shut the door upon Gehazi and the Shunammite woman in order to pray (2 Kings 4:33). The Master exemplified this form of personal, private prayer by daily seeking out lonely places to offer up prayers to His Father in heaven.

When you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him. (Matthew 6:7–8)

Today’s Gospel readers often understand the warnings against “meaningless repetitions” as an indictment against the liturgical prayers of the

When Yeshua warned His disciples not to pray using “meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do,” He may have had in view the Greco-pagan worship systems of the first century. The Greek word that the New American Standard Bible translates as “meaningless repetitions” is derived from a related noun meaning “stammer” or “stutter.” The word in Matthew 6:7 refers not to a speech impediment, but to the repetition of meaningless syllables. New Testament scholars suggest that Yeshua was referring to the formulaic repetition of either intelligible or unintelligible names of gods (or angels), magic words, ecstatic utterances, and petition formulas common in the pagan Roman world—a style of prayer that some early Jewish mystics employed to achieve altered consciousness and apocalyptic visions.

The Master told His disciples that they do not need to rely on gimmicks or tricks to get God's attention. Yeshua told His disciples that "your Father knows what you need before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:8). We can pray with complete confidence that our simplest prayers are heard and received by God.

**FOCUS
SECTION**

3

1. Contrast the two modes of prayer common in first-century Jewish practice.
2. How would Yeshua have regarded the practice of public liturgical prayer?

3. What, specifically, was Yeshua probably referring to with the phrase “vain repetitions”?

GROUP DISCUSSION: Praying in public places outside of a worship service is not a common practice among Christians in many parts of the world today. What are some basic principles we can nevertheless take away and apply from this passage?

FOCUS
SECTION

4

TEACH US TO PRAY

Pray, then, in this way. (Matthew 6:9)

Yeshua was “praying in a certain place, and after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples’” (Luke 11:1). Did the disciples not know how to pray? On the contrary, prayer is one of the central pillars of Jewish practice. First-century Jews regularly participated in the prayer services of the synagogue and Temple. From early childhood, the disciples learned the blessings, benedictions, petitions, and doxologies of Jewish prayer and daily life.

Rabbi Yeshua taught His disciples a prayer. He said, “Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come’” (Matthew 6:9). Did Yeshua intend them to pray the *Our Father* as a fixed liturgical prayer, or did He simply offer it to them as a model short prayer worthy of emulation? Anyone familiar with Jewish prayer recognizes that the *Our Father* is a patently Jewish prayer that fits naturally into the context of synagogue liturgy. The *Our Father* shows every indication that it was intended to be a liturgical prayer. By the late first century at the latest, believers already prayed the *Our Father* liturgically at the three times of daily prayer: “This is what you should pray three times a day” (*Didache* 8.3).

The *Our Father* contains obvious similarities to several important synagogue prayers. It consists primarily of seven short petitions. The first three petitions are thematically eschatological (universal in scope and concerning the end times); the last four petitions are concerned with the immediate needs of the day.

ADDRESS: Our Father who is in heaven

PETITION 1: Hallowed be Your name.

PETITION 2: Your kingdom come.

PETITION 3: Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

PETITION 4: Give us this day our daily bread.

PETITION 5: Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

PETITION 6: And do not lead us into temptation,

PETITION 7: But deliver us from evil.

DOXOLOGY: *For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*

Where does the *Our Father* belong in the sequence of Jewish prayer? When Yeshua taught this prayer to the disciples, how did He intend for them to use it? In what way did John teach his disciples to pray? What did Yeshua's disciples hope to receive when they said, "Master, teach us to pray"?

In the days of the sages, individual rabbis created short liturgical prayers for their disciples to add as a meditation at the conclusion of their daily prayers. The Talmud preserves several examples of prayers distinctive to a certain sage and his school of disciples. For example:

When Rabbi Eleazar concluded his recitation of prayer, he prayed, "May it be Your will, O LORD our God, to cause love, brotherhood, peace, and friendship to swell in our midst, and may You set our portion in paradise, and grant us good companionship and a good inclination in Your world, and may we rise early and obtain the desire of our heart—to fear Your name, and may you be pleased to satisfy our desires." When Rabbi Yochanan concluded his recitation of prayer, he prayed, "May it be your will, O LORD, our God, to look upon our shame and behold our affliction and clothe Yourself in Your mercies and cover Yourself in Your strength and wrap Yourself in lovingkindness and gird Yourself in Your graciousness, and may Your attributes of kindness and mercy prevail." (Talmud)

John the Immerser taught his disciples a particular prayer unique to their school. Yeshua's disciples asked Him to give them a signature prayer of their own. He gave them the *Our Father*. In the same way that the other rabbis gave their disciples a signature prayer for their particular school of discipleship, Yeshua gave us the *Our Father* to function as a short petition for the kingdom at the conclusion of our daily prayers.

STUDY QUESTIONS



- 1. Into what two categories do the seven petitions of the *Our Father* fall?

- 2. What were the disciples really asking for when they asked Yeshua to teach them how to pray?

GROUP DISCUSSION: Contrast the *Our Father* with the two examples given of prayers from other rabbis in the Talmud. What stands out as the main theme of each?



PETITION 1: HALLOWED BE THY NAME

Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name. (Matthew 6:9)

Rabbi Yeshua taught His disciples to address the LORD as “Our Father, who is in heaven.”

Jewish liturgy almost always formulates prayer in the first person common plural form. That is to say: “Our God, our LORD, God of our fathers,” etc. The plural forms preserve consciousness of Israel’s national covenant relationship with God. The individual is important before the LORD, but individual expression takes second place behind the collective identity of the people of God.

The *Our Father* follows the same convention—an indication that the Master intended the *Our Father* for use in liturgical contexts rather than private prayer behind closed doors.

Bible commentaries sometimes mistakenly assume that Yeshua was the first to address God as “Father.” On the contrary, Jewish liturgical tradition often refers to God as “Our Father” and “Father in heaven.” Jewish custom “hallows” God’s name by avoiding pronouncing the name and by using evasive synonyms such as “Lord” and “Father.” The title “Father in heaven”

appears frequently in rabbinic literature as a circumlocution for the name of the LORD. In keeping with that tradition, Yeshua instructed His disciples to set God’s name apart as holy. Instead of directly addressing God by His sacred name, the disciples prayed, “Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name” (Matthew 6:9).

“Hallow” is simply an old English word meaning to “sanctify” or “make holy.” What does it mean to pray that God’s name be sanctified? The name of God refers to both His reputation and His person. The prophecies of Ezekiel lament that God’s name is profaned by Israel’s subjugation to foreign powers and by their exile among the nations. The LORD says, “I will sanctify My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD ... when I prove Myself holy among you in their sight” (Ezekiel 36:23). In other words, the LORD’s name will be sanctified (proven holy) when He redeems His people, bringing an end to exile and subjugation.

The Prophet Isaiah predicts that in that day, “They will sanctify [His] name; indeed, they will sanctify the Holy One of Jacob and will stand in awe of the God of Israel” (Isaiah 29:23). In this sense, the words, “Hallowed be your name” express the same sentiment as the words “Your kingdom come” and “Your will be done.” When we pray the words “Hallowed be your name,” we are asking God to sanctify His name by bringing the Messianic Era.

The synagogue liturgy contains a prayer called *Kaddish* that expresses the same sentiment as this first petition of the *Our Father*, asking God to hallow (sanctify) His name by bringing the kingdom now:

Let his name be magnified and sanctified in the world ... May he inaugurate his kingdom, sprout forth his salvation, and bring near his Messiah. (*Kaddish*)

STUDY QUESTIONS



1. Was Yeshua the first person to address the God of Israel as “Father”?

2. Generally speaking, what does it mean to “sanctify” God’s name?

3. What must happen before God's name can be finally and fully sanctified?

GROUP DISCUSSION: In light of the above definition of sanctifying God's name, what actions of ours accomplish that? How do we profane His name?

PETITION 2–3: THY KINGDOM COME; THY WILL BE DONE

Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
(Matthew 6:10)

The first three petitions of the *Our Father* prayer are closely linked. All three petitions ask God to bring the Messianic Era—the kingdom of heaven on earth. When we pray, “Your kingdom come,” we are beseeching God to bring about the prophetic “day of the LORD,” the final redemption, and the Messianic Age.

Petitioning God for the advent of the kingdom focuses our prayers upon Yeshua's central gospel proclamation: “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Yeshua declared the kingdom, and His own ministry represented the first glimmering of the coming kingdom. The kingdom, however, cannot blossom into its fullness until God's will is done here on earth as it is in heaven. The clear theological implication of this petition is that God's will is not, as of yet, done on earth.

While only God can bring about the final redemption, we carry a certain responsibility to do our part in fulfilling this request. A person who petitions God saying, “Your will be done on earth” should be conscientious about carrying out God's will on a daily basis. Only a hypocrite prays for God's will to be done while at the same time living in defiant rebellion to His revealed directives. In that regard, Yeshua prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, “Not My will, but Yours be done” (Luke 22:42).

One ancient sage had this to say about the reward afforded to those who give themselves over to the will of God:

Do His will as if it were your own will so that He may do your will as if it were His own will. Set aside your will before His will so that He may set aside the will of others before your will. (Mishnah)

PETITION 4: TOMORROW’S BREAD TODAY

Give us this day our daily bread. (Matthew 6:11)

The first three petitions of the *Our Father* prayer are best understood as prayers for the coming of the Messianic Era, when the kingdom of heaven will be established on earth and God’s purposes will be accomplished. The fourth petition, “Give us this day our daily bread,” seems to shift the theme of the prayer away from the coming kingdom to focus on our personal needs, beginning with the most basic human need—daily sustenance.

The Hebrew word for “bread” has a broad range of meaning and can be understood simply as “food.” The Greek of Matthew 6:11 employs the unusual word *epiousios*, which most English translations render as “daily.” Hence, “Give us this day our daily bread.”

The daily bread of the ancient world—the primary food staple—required a daily ritual of grinding, kneading, and baking. The day’s bread represented basic survival. But the word *epiousios* actually implies “coming-day.” If so, the petition translates as “give us today bread for the day that is coming.” This translation accords with the version that appeared in the now-lost *Gospel of the Hebrews*, which read, “Give us today the bread of tomorrow.”

The unusual term “bread of tomorrow” alludes to the banquet of the Messianic Era. By asking God to give us the “bread of tomorrow,” we are not merely asking God for daily provision. Instead, we are asking Him to provide us with a foretaste of the Messianic Era today. Yeshua referred to it as “the children’s bread” (Matthew 15:26). It represents the fulfillment of the Messianic promises of the coming kingdom.

In this way, the fourth petition of the *Our Father* is about more than just food, sustenance, and material provision. When we ask God for “the bread of tomorrow,” we ask Him to let us taste the goodness of redemption today. The simple petition for “daily bread” points us to the coming Messianic Era and the central good-news message of the kingdom: the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

PETITION 5: FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS

Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.
(Matthew 6:12)

Rabbi Yeshua compared a man’s sins to debts owed to God and to others, and He compared sins committed against a man to debts others owed him. Debt symbolizes sin and guilt. The remission of debt symbolizes the forgiveness of sins. Aramaic uses the same word for both “debt” and “sin,” making the metaphor particularly apt.

The Master solemnly warned us that if we do not forgive people when they sin against us, God will not forgive us when we petition Him for forgiveness. Disciples of Yeshua have no options in the matter of whether or not to forgive:

For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions. (Matthew 6:14–15)

We do not have the luxury of holding grudges, nursing bitterness, or retaining resentments for personal offenses. We are not privileged to retain our anger or to repay evil committed against us with evil. “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy” (Matthew 5:7). James the brother of the Master explains, “Judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy [but] mercy triumphs over judgment” (James 2:13).

This forgiveness principle operates on the biblical concept of “measure for measure.” Rabbi Yeshua illustrated this point in Matthew 18 with the parable of the indebted servant. With the same measure we use, it will be measured to us. Just as the indebted servant did not forgive the small debt of his fellow servant, the king refused to forgive his great debt.

The concept of forgiveness on the basis of measure-for-measure occurs frequently in rabbinic literature:

Whoever refrains from exacting his measure, the heavenly court forgives his sins, as it is written [in Micah 7:18], “Who pardons iniquity and passes over the rebellious act.” Whose sin does he forgive? One who passes over sins. (Talmud)

He who is merciful to others, mercy is shown to him by Heaven, while he who is not merciful to others, mercy is not shown to him by Heaven. (Talmud)

He who is merciful to men, toward him God is merciful in heaven. (Talmud)

This teaching about forgiveness finds another parallel in a collection of proverbs compiled more than a century earlier by another Jewish man named Yeshua (Yeshua ben Sira):

Forgive your neighbor the offense he has committed against you, so too shall your sins be forgiven when you pray. Can a man bear hatred against another and seek forgiveness from the Lord? Can a man be merciless toward another man like himself and then ask forgiveness for his own sins? (*Sirach*)

PETITIONS 6–7: DELIVERANCE FROM TEMPTATION AND EVIL



Do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil (Matthew 6:13)

Yeshua’s disciples petition God to lead them “not into temptation.” The Hebrew word for temptation can mean “enticement to sin” or “trial” and “testing.” The same ambiguity exists in Greek. James the brother of the Master clarifies the prayer’s meaning when he warns us against supposing that God entices us to sin:

Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. (James 1:13–14)

God does not lead His people into enticement, but He may lead us into difficulties that test our character and try our faith and allegiance. In that regard, the petition beseeches God to lead us not into difficulties, evil occurrences, tragedy, misfortune, disease, and so forth. The prayer honestly admits one’s own frailty and human limitations. The Master later said to His disciples, “Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Mark 14:38).

Jewish prayer contains close parallels that preserve both connotations of “temptation” and the petition for rescue from evil:

Do not accustom me to transgression; and lead me not into the power of sin, or into power of iniquity, or into the power of temptation, or into power of contempt. And may the good inclination have influence over me; let not the evil inclination have influence over me. Deliver me from evil occurrences and bad diseases. (Talmud)

If God is willing, our prayer to be preserved from having to undergo tests and trials will be answered. However, when we do find ourselves in the midst of difficult circumstances, we ask God for deliverance. The petition “deliver us from evil” can be understood as a prayer for deliverance from any evil circumstance, a prayer for deliverance from persecution, or a prayer for deliverance from the evil one—the adversary, Satan. In 2 Timothy 4:18, Paul declares, “The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom.”

STUDY QUESTIONS

FOCUS
SECTION
6

1. James 1:13 states that God does not tempt anyone. Why then does Yeshua teach us to pray that God will not lead us into temptation?
2. Do we bear any personal responsibility in avoiding temptation? If so, what?
3. If we pray that God will not lead us into difficult circumstances, are we certain to avoid such circumstances?

GROUP DISCUSSION: Abraham was tested in Genesis 22, and passed. David was tested in 2 Samuel 11, and failed. What can we learn from their example about the importance of this petition in the *Our Father*?

THINE IS THE KINGDOM

For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.
(Matthew 6:13)

The concluding doxology of Matthew 6:13 does not appear in all manuscripts. It represents a later addition to the *Our Father*, a liturgical adaptation to render the prayer more suitable for corporate prayer services. Such doxologies are common in apostolic liturgy. They functioned as an amplified “amen.” A proper doxology consists of three components:

1. An ascription of glory to God: “Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory.”
2. A declaration of duration: “Forever.”
3. A concluding “Amen.”

In its simplest form, a doxology says, “To Him be glory forever. Amen” (Romans 11:36; Galatians 1:5), but the apostolic writers typically offer embellishments. The doxology of Matthew 6:13 draws its ascriptions of glory from David’s prayer in 1 Chronicles 29:11:

Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens and the earth; Yours is the dominion, O LORD.

FASTING



But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:17–18)

Rabbi Yeshua expected His disciples to take on fasts. He did not say, “If you fast”; He said, “When you fast.” Fasting constitutes a regular part of Jewish piety. An entire tractate of the Talmud (*Ta’anit*) addresses the practice of fasting. The prophets often called on the nation to fast and pray during times of national catastrophe. The rabbis and community leaders declared public fasts in response to drought, famine, or other threats to the community. Moreover, Judaism practices several annual fast days in commemoration of tragic events in its national history. A person undertaking a fast abstained from food and liquids, sexual relations, and other indulgences. He did not bathe, wash, or comb his hair. He might weep, rend his garments, and adorn himself with sackcloth, ashes, and dirt.

The quintessential fast in Judaism is that of Yom Kippur (Leviticus 16:29). The Talmud says that on Yom Kippur “it is forbidden to wash part of the body as it is forbidden to wash the whole body ... it is forbidden to anoint part of the body [with oil] as it is forbidden to anoint the whole body.”

In seeming contradiction to this ruling, the Master told His disciples to anoint themselves with oil—in this context, used much like soap or shampoo—and wash their faces when fasting. However, our Master’s instruction in this passage is not referring to a community fast or national fast day such as Yom Kippur or the Ninth of Av; rather, He is speaking of private fasts. Under Jewish law, not every fast was as severe as those in which corporate participation was mandatory. The Mishnah touches on this subject, allowing one fasting for rain “to work, to bathe, to anoint the body, to wear shoes, and to perform the duty of cohabitation.”

A person might undertake a period of personal fasting and abstinence for purposes of repentance or heightened supplication and prayer. Rabbi Yeshua

warned His disciples to keep their private fasts private “so that you may not be seen fasting by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you” (Matthew 6:18). The admonition could be paraphrased to say, “When you undertake a personal fast, don’t make it obvious to everyone that you are fasting.”

A public fast presented no danger of fasting only for the sake of being seen by men, since everyone was fasting. The saying is not a criticism of the traditional prohibitions of Yom Kippur or public fasts. Instead, the Master criticized those who ostentatiously flaunted their discomfort while undertaking personal, private fasts.

STUDY QUESTIONS



1. Give some reasons why a first-century Jewish person might fast.
2. What attitude did Yeshua have toward fasting in general?
3. Did every fast in Jewish practice bind its adherent to the same set of restrictions?

GROUP DISCUSSION: Have you ever fasted? What was your goal in fasting? What did you experience as a result? Did you find it difficult to keep your fast a secret?

KEY WORDS AND TERMS



VOCABULARY

epiousios	A Greek word translated into English as “daily”; can also imply “coming day.”
Kaddish	A synagogue liturgical prayer that has similarities to the <i>Our Father</i> .
zuz	An ancient Jewish silver coin struck during the Bar Kochba revolt.



PEOPLE AND PLACES

Yeshua ben Sira	A Hellenistic Jewish scribe, sage, and allegorist from Seleucid-controlled Jerusalem of the Second Temple Era.
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PRIMARY SOURCES

Didache	Also known as <i>The Lord’s Teaching Through the Twelve Apostles to the Nation</i> , it is a brief anonymous treatise written in Koine Greek, dated by modern scholars to the first century.
Gospel of the Hebrews	One of three now-lost Jewish Christian gospels preserved in only fragments in the writing of the early church fathers.
Mishnah	“Repetition”; The Mishnah is a work of Jewish law composed in the second century CE, traditionally attributed to Rabbi Yehudah HaNasi.
Sirach	Also known as <i>The Wisdom of Sirach</i> ; a Jewish work originally in Hebrew of ethical teachings, from approximately 200 to 175 BCE, written by the Jewish scribe Ben Sira of Jerusalem
Talmud	Foundational collection of Jewish law arranged in sixty-three tractates. The Talmud contains two elements: the Mishnah and Gemara (commentary on the Mishnah). The Talmud was compiled in the early sixth century from long-remembered oral tradition.



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TORAHPORTIONS

"Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the LORD." (Deuteronomy 8:3)

READ THE BIBLE JESUS READ. Torah Club Members should study the weekly Torah portion (parashah) in addition to the weekly gospel lesson. The lessons in *Jesus, My Rabbi* depict Jesus as a teacher of the Torah, so it's important to study the five books of Moses. TorahPortions.org provides the scriptures that are read every Sabbath in the synagogue (and a suggested gospel selection for Messianic Jewish synagogues). Accompanying online devotionals bring the Torah portion to life and connect you more closely with Jesus, your Rabbi.

#	PARASHAH	DATE	TORAH	HAFTARAH
GENESIS / B'REISHEET				
1	B'reisheet	17 Oct. 2020	Gen. 1:1-6:8	1 Sam. 20:18-42
2	Noach	24 Oct. 2020	Gen. 6:9-11:32	Isa. 54:1-55:5
3	Lech Lecha	31 Oct. 2020	Gen. 12:1-17:27	Isa. 40:27-41:16
4	Vayera	7 Nov. 2020	Gen. 18:1-22:24	2 Kgs. 4:1-37
5	Chayei Sarah	14 Nov. 2020	Gen. 23:1-25:18	1 Kgs. 1:1-31
6	Toldot	21 Nov. 2020	Gen. 25:19-28:9	Mal. 1:1-2:7
7	Vayetze	28 Nov. 2020	Gen. 28:10-32:3(2)*	Hos. 12:13(12)-14:10(9)*
8	Vayishlach	5 Dec. 2020	Gen. 32:4(3)-36:43*	Oba. 1-21
9	Vayeshev	12 Dec. 2020	Gen. 37:1-40:23	Zec. 2:14-4:7
10	Miketz	19 Dec. 2020	Gen. 41:1-44:17	1 Kgs. 3:15-4:1
11	Vayigash	26 Dec. 2020	Gen. 44:18-47:27	Eze. 37:15-28
12	Vayechi	2 Jan. 2021	Gen. 47:28-50:26	1 Kgs. 2:1-12
EXODUS / SHEMOT				
13	Shemot	9 Jan. 2021	Exo. 1:1-6:1	Isa. 27:6-28:13, 29:22-23
14	Va'era	16 Jan. 2021	Exo. 6:2-9:35	Eze. 28:25-29:21
15	Bo	23 Jan. 2021	Exo. 10:1-13:16	Jer. 46:13-28
16	Beshalach	30 Jan. 2021	Exo. 13:17-17:16	Jdg. 4:4-5:31
17	Yitro	6 Feb. 2021	Exo. 18:1-20:23	Isa. 6:1-7:6, 9:5-6(6-7)*
18	Mishpatim	13 Feb. 2021	Exo. 21:1-24:18	2 Kgs. 12:1(11:21)-17(16)*
19	Terumah	20 Feb. 2021	Exo. 25:1-27:19	1 Sam. 15:2-15:34
20	Tetzaveh	27 Feb. 2021	Exo. 27:20-30:10	Eze. 43:10-43:27
21	Ki Tisa	6 Mar. 2021	Exo. 30:11-34:35	Eze. 36:16-38
22/ 23	Vayak'hel / Pekudei	13 Mar. 2021	Exo. 35:1-40:38	Eze. 45:16-46:18
LEVITICUS / VAYIKRA				
24	Vayikra	20 Mar. 2021	Lev. 1:1-5:26(6:7)*	Isa. 43:21-44:23
25	Tzav	27 Mar. 2021	Lev. 6:1(8)-8:36*	Mal. 3:4-3:24
	Pesach i	28 Mar. 2021*	Exo. 12:21-51; Num. 28:16-25	Josh. 5:2-6:1
	Pesach vii	3 Apr. 2021*	Exo. 13:17-15:26; Num. 28:19-25	2 Sam. 22:1-51
26	Sh'mini	10 Apr. 2021	Lev. 9:1-11:47	2 Sam. 6:1-7:17
27/ 28	Tazria / Metzora	17 Apr. 2021	Lev. 12:1-15:33	2 Kgs. 7:3-20
29/ 30	Acharei Mot / Kedoshim	24 Apr. 2021	Lev. 16:1-20:27	Amos 9:7-15
31	Emor	1 May 2021	Lev. 21:1-24:23	Eze. 44:15-31
32/ 33	Behar / Bechukotai	8 May 2021	Lev. 25:1-27:34	Jer. 16:19-17:14

#	PARASHAH	DATE	TORAH	HAFTARAH
NUMBERS / BAMIDBAR				
34	Bamidbar	15 May 2021	Num. 1:1-4:20	Hos. 2:1-2:22
	Shavu'ot	17 May 2021*	Exo. 19:1-20:23; Num. 28:26-31	Eze. 1:1-28, 3:12
35	Nasso	22 May 2021	Num. 4:21-7:89	Jdg. 13:2-25
36	Beha'alotcha	29 May 2021	Num. 8:1-12:16	Zec. 2:14(10)-4:7*
37	Shelach	5 Jun. 2021	Num. 13:1-15:41	Josh. 2:1-24
38	Korach	12 Jun. 2021	Num. 16:1-18:32	1 Sam. 11:14-12:22
39	Chukat	19 Jun. 2021	Num. 19:1-22:1	Jdg. 11:1-11:33
40	Balak	26 Jun. 2021	Num. 22:2-25:9	Mic. 5:6(7)-6:8*
41	Pinchas	3 Jul. 2021	Num. 25:10-30:1(29:40)*	Jer. 1:1-2:3
42/ 43	Mattot / Massei	10 Jul. 2021	Num. 30:2(1)-36:13*	Isa. 66:1-66:24
DEUTERONOMY / DEVARIM				
44	Devarim	17 Jul. 2021	Deut. 1:1-3:22	Isa. 1:1-2:7
45	Va'etchanan	24 Jul. 2021	Deut. 3:23-7:11	Isa. 40:1-26
46	Ekev	31 Jul. 2021	Deut. 7:12-11:25	Isa. 49:14-51:3
47	Re'eh	7 Aug. 2021	Deut. 11:26-16:17	1 Sam. 20:18-20:42
48	Shoftim	14 Aug. 2021	Deut. 16:18-21:9	Isa. 51:12-52:12
49	Ki Tetze	21 Aug. 2021	Deut. 21:10-25:19	Isa. 54:1-10
50	Ki Tavo	28 Aug. 2021	Deut. 26:1-29:8(9)*	Isa. 60:1-22
51	Nitzavim	4 Sep. 2021	Deut. 29:9(10)-30:20*	Isa. 61:10-63:9
	Rosh HaShanah	7 Sep. 2021*	Gen. 21:1-34; Num. 29:1-6	1 Sam. 1:1-2:10
52	Vayelech	11 Sep. 2021	Deut. 34:1-30	Hos. 14:2(1)-10(9)*; Mic. 7:18-20; Joel 2:15-27
	Yom Kippur	16 Sep. 2021	Lev. 16:1-34; Num. 29:7-11	Isa. 57:14-58:14
53	Ha'azinu	18 Sep. 2021	Deut. 32:1-52	2 Sam. 22:1-22:51
	Sukkot i	21 Sep. 2021	Lev. 22:26-23:44; Num. 29:12-16	Zec. 14:1-21
	Shemini Atzeret / Simchat Torah*	28 Sep. 2021 (29 Sep. 2021)*	Deut. 14:22-16:17; Num. 29:35-30:1(29:40)*	1 Kgs. 8:54-66
54	Vezot ha'Bracha	29 Sep. 2021	Deut. 33:1-34:12	Josh. 1:1-18

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