

We all want to **WIN**.

Genesis 1 (repeated)

And God saw that it was **good**.

Genesis 1:27-28a (NLT)

So God created human beings **in His own image**. **In the image of God** He created them; male and female He created them. ²⁸ Then God **blessed** them and said, “**Be** fruitful and multiply. **Fill** the earth and **govern** it. **Reign** over ... {*fish, birds, every living thing*}.

If I follow God, will I still win?

Will God do what I want?

Will God come through for me?

God loves but is He competent?

Matthew 6:1

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have **no reward** with your **Father** in heaven.

Father (x10)

The direct availability of God to nurture, provide, sustain ...

Rewards (x9)

The desire of God to bless and reward.

Jesus is presenting God as the **decisive and dominant** presence in our lives.

Life in the Kingdom does NOT change the fact that our hearts have **desires** and are wired for **rewards**.

→ But it does change **where the heart looks!**

FATHER ... Man upstairs?

REWARDER ... Withholder?

Jesus' bold implication: The **Superiority of God** (as Father; Reward).

Matthew 6:2-4

So whenever you **give** to the poor, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be **applauded** by people. Truly I tell you, they have their **reward**.³ But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,⁴ so that your giving may be **in secret**. And your **Father** who sees in secret will **reward** you.

PATTERN (of the 3 illustrations):

- **Human ACTION with INTENTION (the why: reason, motive, desire)**
- **SHIFT: looking to God as Father and Rewarder**

1) We are not settling for **less but rather trusting God our Father for the **best**.**

Matthew 6:5-6

"Whenever you **pray**, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners **to be seen** by people. Truly I tell you, they have their **reward**.⁶ But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your **Father** who is **in secret**. And your **Father** who sees in secret will **reward** you.

2) We must resist the temptation to pursue **immediate and right now rewards rather than trust God our Father for **eternal and better** rewards.**

Matthew 6:19-20

"Don't store up for yourselves **treasures on earth**, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.²⁰ But store up for yourselves **treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal.

When do we want to **win**?

Earth can be really convincing can't it?

Matthew 6:7-8

When you pray, don't babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they'll be **heard for their many words**.⁸ Don't be like them, because your **Father** knows the things you need before you ask Him.

Matthew 6:16-18

"Whenever you **fast**, don't be gloomy like the hypocrites. For they disfigure their faces so that their fasting is **obvious to people**. Truly I tell you, they have their **reward**.¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,¹⁸ so that your fasting isn't obvious to

others but to your **Father** who is in secret. And your **Father** who sees in secret will **reward** you.

3) We must understand that we are not rewarded for our **performance but our **dependence** (~where we set our hearts to look).**

Our **dependence showcases His **sufficiency**.**

Our **satisfaction showcases His **superiority**.**

Matthew 6:9 (ESV)

Pray then like this: “Our Father in heaven, **hallowed be Your name**.”

Revelation 21:3-7

Then I heard a loud voice from **the throne**: Look, God’s dwelling is **with** humanity, and He will live **with** them. They will be His peoples, and God Himself will be **with** them and will be their God. ⁴He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be **no more**; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.

⁵Then the One **seated on the throne** said, “Look, I am making everything **new**.” He also said, “Write, because these words are faithful and true.” ⁶Then He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will freely give to the thirsty from the spring of the water of life. ⁷The one who **conquers** will **inherit** these things, and I will be His God, and He will be my son.

What do you think about when you think about God?

What does God think about when God thinks about you?