

DO RIGHT FOR THE RIGHT REASON

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Matthew 6:1-18

1. In chapter five of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus focused on several important topics.
 - a. He described the character of a Christian.
 - b. He discussed the Christian's purpose in the world—to be salt and light thus bringing glory to God.
 - c. He defined the Christian's relationship to the Law—we are to fulfill the spirit, or intent, of the Law.
2. In chapter six we find Jesus dealing with the Christian's relationship to God as our Heavenly Father.
 - a. In verses 1-18 He dealt with certain religious practices.
 - (1) The giving of alms, or ministering to the needs of others.
 - (2) Maintaining a private prayer life and quiet time to fellowship with God.
 - (3) Fasting, or living a life characterized by self-denial.
 - b. In verses 19-34 Jesus dealt with the need to trust God.
3. In verse one Jesus issued a stern warning related to the motivation behind our actions.
4. We are to do right, but we are to do right for the right reason.
5. Some wrong motivations would be:
 - a. Being religious as a means of earning God's favor.
 - b. Being fearful of the consequences of not being religious.
 - c. Seeing religion as a means of advancing our own welfare in this world.
 - d. Peer pressure—doing what is socially acceptable in the eyes of others.
 - e. A desire for power and position.
 - f. Wanting man's approval and the prestige that comes with it.

I. Practicing your righteousness before men.

A. To be understood the Word of God must be studied and interpreted systematically.

NOTE: Some interpret chapter 6:1-6 in a way that would rule out public offerings and praying in public.

1. Acts 4:32-35 and 5:1-2 makes it clear that offerings to the church were given publicly and laid at the feet of the Apostles.

2. Acts 4:23-31 reveals that united, public praying was a part of the life of the church.

B. The Bible makes it clear that we are to be salt and light by performing righteous acts and practicing righteous living, and by doing so we are to glorify God. Matthew 5:13-16

"You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; 15 nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 **"Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."**

C. Paul wrote, "The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you." Philippians 4:9

D. Our outward actions are to be the outgrowth of our "secret," intimate relationship with God the Father through Jesus Christ the Son.

II. Beware of doing what you do to be noticed by men.

A. We have already seen that Jesus commanded His followers to, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

NOTE: What we do is to be done for the glory of God and the good of others.

B. In dealing with the practices of almsgiving, praying and fasting Jesus dealt with wrong motivations; giving to be honored by men, praying to be seen by men, and, when fasting, neglecting ones appearance and putting on a gloomy face to be noticed by men.

C. The question is, are we trying to please and glorify God, or are we trying to impress ourselves and others?

D. When Jesus said, "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing," He was speaking of our tendency to do what we do for our own benefit or sense of self-worth.

E. Some examples of being properly motivated would be:

1. Jesus, who said, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. 29 "And He who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone, **for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.**" John 8:28-29

2. The Apostle Paul who wrote, "Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. 2 In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy. 3 But to me it is a very small thing that I may be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. 4 For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but the one who examines me is the Lord. 5 **Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.**" 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

3. George Muller who wrote the following. "There was a day when I died to George Muller and his opinions, preferences, tastes, and will, died to the world, its approval or censure; died to the approval or blame of even my brethren and friends, and since then I have studied only to show myself approved unto God."

F. If we would be approved unto God we must be motivated by:

1. Love. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing."

2. A desire to be godly. 1 Timothy 4:7

"On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness."

3. A desire to glorify God. 1 Corinthians 10:31

"Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

4. A desire to impact others for Christ. 1 Corinthians 10:32-33

"Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; 33 just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved."

NOTE: Paul uses the word "please" here in the sense of benefitting them rather than gaining their approval.

III. Beware of forfeiting your reward in Heaven.

A. Jesus clearly warned that there is no reward in Heaven for those who do what they do to be noticed by men. 6:1

B. Look again at Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 4:5.

“Therefore do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God.”

C. Jesus said that God will reward those:

1. Who help others for the right reason.
2. Who pray humbly and honestly.
3. Who deny themselves for the sake of His kingdom.

D. How sad it will be for those who managed to not only deceive others, but themselves as well.

NOTE: Some are going to find out they have never been saved, while others are going to find out that their service to God was wrongly motivated.

APPLICATION

1. Self-examination is an important aspect of living a life before God that is pleasing to Him.
2. This message raises some questions we might ask ourselves.
 - a. Am I motivated by a desire to glorify and please God? Does my prayer life reflect that desire?
 - b. Am I motivated by love and compassion? What angers and grieves me?
 - c. Am I motivated by a servant attitude? Is my chief concern me or others?
 - d. Am I motivated by the joy set before me; to one day hear the words, “Well done, you good and faithful servant?”