

Look at Me!

Matthew 6:1-6; 16-18

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Take-Home Truth: Jesus' followers are to be motivated by God's love – not the praise of people.

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ²So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁵And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you . . . ¹⁶When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."
Matthew 6:1-6; 16-18 (New International Version)

Principle #1: Parading our acts of righteousness for the approval of others is a temptation in the Kingdom.

False Narrative: "My worth is in the approval of others."

Kingdom Narrative: "My worth is found in the eyes of God."

Principle #2: We are to model our faith – with the right heart!

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:16 (NIV)

False Narrative: "I need to let others know how devoted I am to God."

Kingdom Narrative: "When I model my faith with the right heart, others will see God."

Principle #3: God will reward the believer who practices the discipline of secrecy.

“But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” Matthew 6:3-4 (NIV)

“But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”
Matthew 6:6 (NIV)

“But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.” Matthew 6:17-18 (NIV)

God is calling us to enter into Jesus’ “Secret Service”.

Ask yourself:

- Whenever I accomplish something or receive accolades for something I have done, do I immediately want to let others know?
- Do I try to keep others from knowing my weaknesses and failings? Am I concerned about what others will think of me?
- In most conversations I try to appear humble, but I really want the other person to know how wonderful I am. And if that doesn’t happen, do I find subtle ways to inject my accomplishments, to share my resumé? Do I turn their stories into opportunities to share my own?
- Do I name-drop? Are people really aware of all the famous people I have met or spent time with?
- Has nearly every act of service I have ever done somehow become known to others?
- Do I find myself comparing my ministry results and numbers to others?
- Can I be content operating behind the scenes?

False Narrative: “I’m not supposed to let anyone see me serving the Lord.”

Kingdom Narrative: “Live every area of life with the motive to please God.”