

What is Your Motive?

Matt.6:1-18

Intro: Teenage children showed lots of respect on their parents, did everything the parents asked them to do without whining or complaining. They even cleaned their room and did extra chores without being told. In the evening, the parents found out why they did it. They asked their parents to go to an evening event they knew their parents would normally say no. You see, these children did all the right things that day, but for the wrong reasons. (Their motive was wrong). The same happens in our relationship with God. We may find ourselves doing things Christians are supposed to do, for selfish reason. Our Lord spoke about this on the sermon on the mountain. (Matt.6)

Jesus started this teaching with a warning “**Beware, be careful not to do your acts of righteousness before others in order to be seen they them.** (ESV)

-Beware of practicing your righteousness before others to be seen by them.

(*Acts of righteousness =good deeds*) These are good things. You see, the good deeds or works we do are to bring glory to God (**Matt.5:16**). Here Jesus is causing us to examine ourselves. **Are you doing this for God’s glory or for your own?**

What is the motivation behind in doing these great things?

Are you doing it to bring glory to God or to impress people?

Doing the right thing for the wrong reason may impress people, but it won’t impress God. When the intention of your heart is to be noticed by others, Jesus said that you won’t have a reward in heaven.

Three acts of righteousness in the Jewish faith. Giving, praying and fasting. These are great practices, which most religions do, but we could practice them with wrong motives.

-Giving to those in need (v.2-4)

-giving is not meant to be showy. This is what the hypocrites did. (the word hypocrite carries the idea of an actor who plays two role, two-faced person; a pretender). They would announce in their synagogues and even in the streets if they helped someone in need. They gave because they wanted to be praised by others. *How often we show this hypocritical attitude when we give money to charity, or when we help someone?* We want everyone to know what we did.

-Your giving is between you and God. Make it anonymous, no one needs to know how much you gave and for what cause. **Your Father in heaven will reward a heart that gives not causing attention to itself.** *God rewards a person who gives with the right motives.* It’s ok to help those in need, we are commanded to do so, but we are also commanded to have the right attitude when we do so.

-Praying done for show doesn’t get God’s attention.

-don't pray like the hypocrites, they pray to be seen by others or admired by those who watch them. *This is the only reward they get. They impress people, but God thinks this is hypocritical attitude.*

-Prayer is something personal, it's between you and your Father.

Don't pray with meaningless words, (babbling, and vain repetitions)

Jesus here taught his disciples how to pray. Our Father in heaven hallowed be your name....

Verses 14-15 Jesus addressed the connection between prayer and forgiveness. If you don't forgive those who sin against you, God won't forgive your sins.

Fasting

When you fast, don't make it obvious. -Don't be like the hypocrites; this is to be between you and God

-There are so many people fasting during this time, because it's on the calendar and others are telling them to do it. ***This is a great discipline you can use to develop your relationship with God, but you may do this for the wrong reason.*** You want people to notice you; you want to appear holier than others. It's all about your being acknowledged by others. Then this defeats the purpose of your fast. *This won't get closer to God since he knows the intention of your heart in doing it.*

Jesus here did not give us a specific day in which we can give to the needy, a time when we can pray or fast. **He said when you give to the needed (v.2, 3); when you pray (v.5,6, 7); when you fast (v.16, 17)**

It's implied that you should be doing these things, these are great things, which when done right, get you closer to God and bring glory to him.

Jesus shows us the right way of doing them in order to honor God, but he also shows us the hypocritical way or selfish way of doing them.

When it comes to doing things for God, you must do it according to what he has said. We may be doing these and many other things for God for the wrong reasons. *You want to join the praise team to be on stage; you want to go to church, not to praise God and work on your relationship with him, but because your friend is there. You want to serve in that ministry because you want to feel needed. I want to do this because no one is doing it.* Our deeds are intended to bring glory to God, but when done with the wrong motives, God doesn't get honored and they are counted against you. Doing good things for the wrong reason won't get you a reward in heaven. Jesus promised to reward his people according to their deeds. **(Rev.22:12)** As we continue to serve God and work on our relationship with him, we must always remember Jesus' warning to keep us from doing something good with wrong intentions. ***"Watch out! Don't do your good deeds publicly, to be admired by others, for you will lose the reward from your Father in heaven. NLT***

