

THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF OUR LIVES: WHAT ONLY GOD SEES

MATTHEW 6:1-18

CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE - NOVEMBER 17, 2024

SCRIPTURE READING

Matthew 6:1-18 ESV

Giving to the Needy

6 *“Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.*

2 *“Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not 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.*

The Lord’s Prayer

5 *“And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6 But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

7 *“And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. 9 Pray then like this:*

“Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name.

10 Your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread,

12 and forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil.

14 For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Fasting

16 “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

ICE BREAKER QUESTION

Is it possible for you to do good things in ways that are bad for you?

SERMON RECAP

There is a way to do good things (i.e., acts of righteousness, such as giving to the needy, praying, and fasting) that is actually bad for us ... and not glorifying to God.

- We are constantly tempted to do good things in order to be seen (and rewarded) by others.
- We are constantly tempted to do good things in order to be seen (and rewarded) by ourselves.

Yet, Jesus is calling us to a better way to live.

- True life is found in doing good things in the gladness of being seen (and rewarded) by God alone.
- The most important part of your life is the part that no one else but God sees.
- True life is found in doing good things in the gladness of bringing glory to God alone.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Observation: What does the passage say?

1. Read Matthew 6:1-18 aloud as a group. Before interpreting or applying the passage, share observations about it.
 - What overarching statement in this passage summarizes the passage's overall message? (Matthew 6:1)
 - What main subject(s) did Jesus address in this passage?
 - Who are Jesus' listeners cautioned against imitating? (Matthew 6:2, 5, 7, 16)
 - Why do the referenced hypocrites conduct themselves as they do? For whom are they performing? (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16)
 - What is the eternal outcome of the hypocrites' lives? (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16)
 - What positive behavioral commands did Jesus give to His listeners?
 - What are the promised consequences of hearing and heeding Jesus' words? What are the promised consequences of not doing so?
2. How would you explain or summarize today's passage in your own words?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. What does this passage imply about the dynamics and interplay between our relationship with others and our relationship with the Lord? For example:
 - How might the way that we position others in our hearts affect the way that we relate to the Lord and the heart posture that we take before Him?
 - How might the way that we position the Lord in our hearts affect the way that we relate to others and the heart posture that we take before them?
2. Read and reflect on the Lord's prayer (Matthew 6:7-15). In this prayer, what is the proper heart posture that Jesus is inviting us to take i) before the Lord, and ii) in relationship with others?

Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?

1. How much does a desire for the approval of others shape your daily conduct and conversation? How much of your self-image and self-perception is shaped by the approval of others?
2. In what ways might a desire to gain the approval of others shape your praying, giving to the needy, and/or fasting (or your reluctance to do these things)? What might you be missing by praying, giving to the needy, and fasting (or not doing these things) on these grounds?
3. In verses 2, 5, and 16 of today's passage, the term 'hypocrite' is used to refer to an actor or actress performing on a stage for an audience. A performance-oriented culture can stimulate our fleshly predisposition toward self-preservation and self-promotion. When these tendencies are activated, what impact might they have on—
 - our relationship with ourselves?
 - our relationship with the Lord (including our worship of and service in Him)?
 - the image of the Lord and the message of His gospel that are imparted through our lives?
 - our relationships with others (e.g., How might a desire for approval from others compete with or hinder our godly love for others)?
4. Read Jeremiah 23:6, Matthew 5:6, Galatians 1:10, Colossians 3:23-24, 1 Thessalonians 2:4, and Hebrews 11:6. Whose pleasure and approval is to be our heart's desire? Who does the Lord satisfy and reward?
5. How is God specifically calling you to stop living for the recognition of others, or even congratulation from yourself, and start living for the reward that comes from God alone?
6. Spend time in your Church Groups--
 - Openly and specifically praying, confessing ways in which you habitually pursue approval and recognition from others and repenting of these habits;
 - Receiving the Lord's forgiveness and cleansing (cf. 1 John 1:9); and
 - Sharing and reflecting on ways in which you might live for the reward that comes from God alone.

LEADER NOTES

MEADOWLARK WINTER WALK OF LIGHTS | Join our church family on December 3 for a safe, outdoor opportunity to intentionally foster relationships with friends, neighbors, and co-workers as we approach the Christmas season. We have a limited number of tickets available for our McLean Bible Church (MBC) Tysons congregation at Meadowlark's Winter Walk of Lights, free of charge (on a first-come-first-served basis). Our only request? Bring someone with you who does not know Jesus. For more information and to register for tickets, click on the following link.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

CHRISTMAS FAMILY SCAVENGER HUNT | We are hosting a fun family Christmas scavenger hunt for our MBC Tysons church family on Saturday, December 14! Invite friends, family, and neighbors to join us for a scavenger hunt around the Tysons area. Be prepared to get creative, work as a team, and look for opportunities to share the gospel with friends you bring or people you encounter while you are grabbing the perfect photo. Meet on the upper deck of the Tysons parking garage, and then head out with your team in the car. Prizes will be awarded to winning teams, and we will celebrate with hot cocoa at the end. Let the games begin!

[REGISTER HERE](#)

NIGHT TO SHINE | MBC is hosting Night to Shine on Friday, February 7, 2025 from 6-9 pm! Night to Shine is an unforgettable prom night experience, centered on God's love, for people with special needs. We are blessed to be a part of this growing worldwide movement where thousands of people with special needs will be celebrated, given the royal treatment and reminded of God's love for them. We need donations of formal dresses or suits to bless our Night to Shine guests. Donation drop-off is at MBC Tyson's 1st floor Front Desk. To sign-up to attend or volunteer, click on the links below.

[REGISTER TO ATTEND](#)

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