

The Teachings of Jesus

Authentic Spiritual Service

Matthew 6:1-18

Introduction

In the last part of Chapter 5, Jesus critiques the religion of the scribes and Pharisees and how they teach a completely different way to gain God's favor and enter into God's kingdom. Jesus exposes the plan as impossible and introduces God's plan of Grace. In Chapter 6, Jesus teaches how religious leaders teach fundamentally different forms of spirituality.

1. Religious piety focuses on outward, _____ forms of good works.
2. Jesus wants his followers to focus on _____ spiritual service.
3. Some even use doing favors as _____ for money, positions of power, or contacts.
4. The reward of choosing Jesus' way is to grow in grace and _____ for God.

I. Genuine Giving

5. "Giving alms" means giving to those in _____.
6. To be devoted to what God cares about means also caring for the _____ he cares about.
7. The religious leaders of Jesus day found ways to pervert a beautiful way of worshipping God by

turning it into a _____ relations
campaign for themselves.

8. That behavior doesn't impress God and will cause you to miss out on the real _____.
9. Jesus is not saying that all of your giving must be _____.
10. In the New Testament church, people often gave _____.
11. Jesus says that when you give, you should not make a big _____ of it to others or even make that big a _____ of it to yourself.
12. We are God's stewards; we are responsible for managing his resources in ways that _____ his kingdom.
13. Doing this is not heroic; it is just doing our _____!

II. Sincere Praying

14. Jesus says the religious leaders were perverting personal communication with God by turning it into an opportunity to _____ others.
15. Jesus prayed out _____ with his disciples in Gethsemane in John 17 and in public in John 11.
16. Prayer (alone or with others) should be to God and, therefore, be sincere and _____.
17. The New Testament Christians followed Jesus' _____ and did this all the time.

18. Praying aloud with others should be the
" _____ " of our private
communication with God.

III. Effective Fasting

19. Jesus said, fast and pray sincerely, but don't
_____ it.

20. True fasting is _____ a
lifestyle of sacrificial service for others.

21. Fasting is all about learning to sacrifice things
that cater to the _____ in order to
concentrate on spiritual service.

22. Learning to give sacrificially to others is the key
to true eternal _____.

Conclusion

23. There's a big difference between being religious
and being _____.

If you're turned off by those whose religious piety is
self-serving, you're in good company because Jesus
feels the same way. If you want to know and
experience Jesus' way, remember that it is rooted in
a grace-based relationship with God, which you
begin by receiving Jesus.

Answers

- | | |
|------------------|-----------|
| 1. external | 5. need |
| 2. authentic | 6. people |
| 3. leverage | 7. public |
| 4. effectiveness | 8. reward |

9. anonymous
10. publicly
11. deal
12. advance
13. job
14. impress
15. loud
16. example

17. personal
18. outflow
19. advertise
20. cultivating
21. flesh
22. happiness
23. spiritual

QUESTIONS FOR MEDITATION

1. How can you develop a discipline of giving generously without making a show of things? How much do you give to this church or other Christian ministries? What might God be laying on your heart to give to or increase giving to above what you currently give?
2. Are you comfortable praying out loud? Why or why not? What can you do to become more comfortable praying out loud with others? How can praying out loud with others encourage and comfort them?
3. When was the last time you fasted for anything? What was it for? How did it go? If you've never fasted before, why not? What might God be pressing on you to fast for?