

"Look at ME"

Mark McCartin

9-28-25

Doing the right thing for the wrong reason.

Matthew 6

1. The Motive.

Mat 6:1 *"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."*

2. three examples

a. Mat 6:2 *"So **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. 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. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."*

b. Mat 6:5 *And **when you pray**, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray, standing in the synagogues and in the street corners, to be seen by others. Truly, I tell you, they have received their reward in full."*

⁶ *But when you pray, as a Jesus follower, go into your room, close the door, pray to your father who is unseen, and then your father who sees what is done in secret will reward you."*

c. Mat 6:16 *"**When 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. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so 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."*

3. The pretenders

Mat 6:2,5,16 *"do not be like the hypocrites"*

Jer 9:23-24 *This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, ²⁴ but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD."*

4. Two implications.

a. An audience of One.

Col 3:23-24 *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."*

b. Preoccupation with how one looks rather than who one is.

Zep 3:17 *For the LORD your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, he will calm all your fears. He will rejoice over you with joyful songs."*

Gal 1:10 *Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant."*

Gal 6:7-10 *Don't be misled...You will always harvest what you plant... live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up..."*

1. Universal Desire for Approval

- **Illustration:** “Watch me, Grandpa!” – children naturally crave to be seen and affirmed
 - We never grow out of this longing; it follows us into adulthood.
 - Jesus acknowledges this longing but redirects it.
-

2. Jesus’ Warning in Matthew 6:1

- **Key Theme:** “Doing the right thing for the wrong reason.”
 - Motivation matters more than visibility.
 - Jesus contrasts two outcomes:
 - Living for human applause = temporary reward.
 - Living for God’s approval = eternal reward.
-

3. Case Studies from Matthew 6

- **Giving:** Don’t make a show; do it in secret.
 - **Praying:** Not a production for others to see.
 - **Fasting:** Don’t act miserable to draw attention.
 - **Pattern:** Behavior → Motive → Reward
-

4. Hypocrites vs. True Devotion

- Hypocrite = “stage actor” (Greek *hypokritēs*). Playing a part Tom Cruise is not really 007
 - Acting devoted to God while really seeking human approval.
 - Modern example: presenting curated / edited self on social media.
-

5. Two Modern Implications

1. Living for an Audience of One

- Col 3:23–24: Work as for the Lord.
- Everyday labor (dishwashing, jobs, parenting) can honor God.
- Reward includes joy of God’s delight in us. Read Zep 3:17

2. Appearance vs. Authenticity

- Danger of “how I look” vs. “who I am.”
 - Social media culture highlights self-presentation and approval-seeking.
 - The alternative: God moments that reawaken us to His goodness (e.g., meal, nature, work).
-

6. Eternal Perspective

- Earthly applause is fleeting; God’s “Well done” lasts forever.
 - Building your house on rock = practicing Jesus’ words, not just hearing them.
 - True freedom: shifting our audience from “the crowd” to God alone
-