

Matthew 6:1-4, 16-18

“The Kingdom View of Charity and Fasting”

The Christian life is a giving life, because we are the children of a giving God. We seek to honor God by denying our own desires so that God is glorified. Charity and fasting are holy behaviors but must be done with right attitude. So, join us as we learn to do what is right with the right heart.

Discussion Qs

- 1. Why do you think so very few Christians actually tithe or fast?**
- 2. Why might people find the praise of other people to be attractive?**
- 3. Why does God promise rewards to motivate our giving (and fasting)?**
- 4. Reflection: What changes will you make in regard to charitable giving, and fasting?**

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subject: the Kingdom view of charity and fasting

objective: live to please the Lord

I. do good deeds to please the Lord (vv. 1-4)

A. the right action with the wrong motive doesn't please God

B. God rewards those who live to please Him

1. knowing we've pleased Him
2. bringing Him glory
3. being used by Him
4. eternal rewards

II. fast to please the Lord (vv. 16-18)

A. fasting: denying yourself something in the physical realm (food) for spiritual purposes

1. to draw near to the Lord (Matt. 4:2)
2. to seek direction from the Lord (Acts 13:2, 14:23)

B. Would I still do this if only God knew I was doing it?

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Intro. The Christian life is a giving life, because we are the children of a giving God. We seek to honor God by denying our own desires so that God is glorified.

Why do you think so very few Christians actually tithe or fast?

Subject: Charity and fasting [cf. next week v.5-15 re prayer]

Object: Give and fast to please God (not impress people)

Context: Sermon on the Mount and issues related to Kingdom attitudes and behavior
Charity, fasting & prayer are holy behaviors but must be done with right attitude.

I. Charity [1-4] Do charitable deeds for God's approval

A. Don't give to seek praise from people [1-2] Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

1. Don't forsake God's reward for praise from people [1-2]

a. take heed [1]: pay attention, be careful. **Seen by them [1]:** Greek *theomai* – English “theater” – God does not approve our theatrics to seek accolades from people.

b. no reward in heaven [1,2]: right action with the wrong motive. Sought praise from man not God and got what they desired, but missed out on God's blessing.

1Cor. 3:12-15 motive matters

2. Those who seek glory from men for charitable deeds in God's name are hypocrites

[2] Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men.

Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward: When reputation is more important than character than hypocrisy is likely

a. Synagogues & streets refer to places where people gather. Pharisees blew trumpet & poor would gather & receive charity directly from the Pharisee who would be praised

b. Cf. Barnabas [**Ac. 4:31-37**] vs. Ananias and Sapphira [**Ac. 5:1-11**]

B. Those who give for God's approval are rewarded [3-4] But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.

1. God rewards those who give to bring glory to Him [4]

a. Don't let left know what right is doing [3]: don't draw attn. to self or seek praise

i. Widow's mites [**Mk.12:41-44**] Jesus sees all that is done for Him

Why does God promise rewards to motivate our giving (and fasting)?

2. Kingdom subjects are to give (right behavior) to bring glory to God (right attitude)

a. When you do [2x v. 2, 3]: when, not if. Our giving is presumed

C. How kingdom subjects should give:

1. Jesus affirms the tithe [Matt. 23:23]

- a. A giving Savior should have giving disciples [be generous]
- b. Cf. NT standard is always higher than OT [Matt. 5:21-22, 27-28, 43-44]
- c. What about taxes? Don't they support charity?
 - i. Cf. Jews subject to Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, + Roman taxes. Render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's [Matt. 22:21]

2. Each should give cheerfully [2Cor. 9:7] So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.

3. Regularly and proportionately [1Cor. 16:2] On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.

- a. What if I don't currently have enough to tithe? Learn to budget and allocate to reflect kingdom values. Start giving a percentage and make progress towards 10% (and more if possible)
 - i. Spending reflects priorities: what lifestyle changes will you make to honor God?
 - ii. Millennials (born 1980s to early 2000s) tend to give less as a % of income to charity than other generations. This must change among Christians to support kingdom work

II. Fasting [16-18] Say "no" the flesh to say "yes" to God

A. Don't fast to seek praise from people [16] Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

1. Don't forsake God's reward for praise from people

- a. Pharisees fasted on Monday and Thursday [Lu. 18:12]

B. Those who fast for God's approval are rewarded [17-18] But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who *is* in the secret *place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly

1. God rewards those who fast to bring glory to Him [18]

- a. **But you:** kingdom subjects will fast to please God not people

- i. No one needs to know your fasting but God

2. Kingdom subjects are to fast (right behavior) to bring glory to God (right attitude)

- a. Fasting was only commanded on Yom Kippur [Lev.16:31]

- b. Fasting is good: Jesus fasted [Mt. 4:3] and the disciples [Ac.13:2], but need the right motive - to please God

C. Why kingdom subjects should fast:

1. Draw close to God:

2. Direction:

3. Deny the flesh:

- i. Feed the Spirit and experience victory over the flesh