



**Recap from last week:**

*Non-Resistance*

Matthew 5:38-48

- Choose forgiveness and grace over retaliation or holding a grudge.
- Love and pray for those who may be difficult to get along with.

# SECRECY & REWARDS

## GENEROSITY, PRAYER & FASTING

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1 "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

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.

5 "And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7 And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8 Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him....

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.



## LET'S EXPLORE MATTHEW 6:1-8 & 16-18

### Observe:

- Read Matthew 6:1 again
  - Based on this verse, what is the *context* of this entire passage?
  - How many times is this theme repeated between verses 1-18?
- List all of the negative examples Jesus gives regarding this.
- What is the expected end for doing “acts of righteousness” privately or publicly?
  - Hint: it’s the second half of verse 1
- Recap from last week by reading Matthew 5:46 for repeated context
- Jesus doesn’t rebuke the expectation of receiving a reward. He wants to emphasize the importance of *who* we expect to receive the reward from.
- Look up “reward” in the concordance
  - Tip: Strong’s Greek 3408. μισθός - misthos
    - Found on page 166 in the second half of the Strong’s Concordance in your table basket.
- Look up “secret” in the concordance
  - Tip: Strong’s Greek 2927. κρυπτός - kruptos
    - Found on page 146 in the second half of the Strong’s Concordance in your table basket.
- What questions do you have regarding these passages?

### Interpret:

- Why do you think Jesus kept emphasizing these concepts of “reward” and “secret”?
- Do you see how intent and motive of heart is important to Him in this text, carrying over from what we’ve learned so far from the entire Sermon on the Mount?
- What do you believe these passages mean?
- What is God speaking to you personally through this study?
- Compare your interpretation with a trusted commentary.



## NOW, LET'S READ THE AFTER-SUMMARY TOGETHER

In Matthew 6:1-8, Jesus teaches about doing good deeds with the right heart motives. He warns us not to perform acts of kindness, like giving to the needy, for the sake of being noticed or praised by others. When we seek recognition from people, that's the only reward we'll receive. Instead, Jesus calls us to do these things in secret, trusting in a God who sees everything, even in private. Our focus should be on pleasing God, who is faithful and just. "Acts of Righteousness" without a motive of pleasing just God, Jesus refers to as *hypocrites*. In Greek (Strong's Concordance 5273. *hupokrités*), it means to be an actor or pretender. Jesus desires us to perform acts of worship in spirit and in truth. Motives matter!

In Matthew 6:16-18, Jesus applies this same principle to fasting. He urges us not to fast in a way that draws attention to ourselves, but to do it privately, focusing solely on God. When we fast in secret, God—who sees all things—is faithful to notice and reward us. This passage encourages us to keep our spiritual acts between us and God, trusting that He knows and honors our efforts, even when no one else does. Our God is one who sees everything, and He is faithful to reward those who seek Him with sincerity and humility.

These teachings remind us that our relationship with Him is deeply personal and far more meaningful than the applause and approval of people. Whether through giving, fasting, or other acts of faith, what matters most is our heart's posture before God. Because His integrity is unwavering, we can trust Him to reward justly. By keeping our focus on Him and trusting in His faithfulness, we can rest assured that He values our quiet, humble, unseen efforts and will reward them in ways beyond what we can imagine.



## APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- Are there any habits or actions you need to let go of because they are driven by a desire for human recognition rather than a desire to honor God?
  - How can you shift your focus to pleasing God instead?
- How can you practice giving, praying, or fasting in a way that is truly between you and God, trusting that He sees and will reward you in His time?
- What steps can you take this week to deepen your trust in God's faithfulness to reward your private acts of righteousness, even when no one else acknowledges them?

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### *Closing Prayer...*

Father, thank You for reminding us that our acts of worship should be done with pure and sincere hearts, seeking only Your approval. Help us to resist the temptation to seek recognition from others and instead serve quietly. Thank you for reminding us that you see the motives of our hearts. It is our desire to live a life revering you. Forgive us for forgetting that at times. We trust in Your faithfulness, appreciate your patience, and believe that You will reward us far beyond any person. May our motives always be to honor You in all that we do. Lord, we ask that you guide us to keep our focus on You alone. Help us to grow in humility and sincerity, remembering that You are the God who sees and rewards what is done in secret. Strengthen our trust in Your promises and teach us to live for Your glory, not for the approval of man. In Jesus name, amen.

