

## Motives Matter

Matthew 6:1-4

1. Have you ever interacted with someone or heard someone say that hypocrisy is the reason they do not go to church? What do you think these people mean by hypocrisy? Is their criticism valid?
  
2. Go through chapter five and locate each passage in which Jesus says something about righteousness or about the practice of good works. Briefly discuss what Jesus says about righteousness in each example.
  - a. What does He say about our desires for or attitudes toward righteousness?
  
  - b. What does He say about the visibility of our righteousness or good works?
  
  - c. What does He say about the necessity of righteousness or good works?
  
3. Read Matthew 6:1 and summarize what you think Jesus is saying.
  - a. Is Jesus condemning the practice of righteousness? What is He condemning?
  
  - b. What is the motivation of those practicing what Jesus condemns? How does this connect with John 5:44 and the willingness to believe in Jesus?
  
  - c. Briefly read verses 2, 5, and 16. How do you see the practice of what Jesus condemns in each of these examples? What are these people wanting?
  
  - d. What are the implications to you of Jesus command to “Beware”?
  
  - e. In what ways are you most tempted to use godly practices as a way of impressing others or winning approval of others?
  
  - f. Can you give examples of things you might do or not do within the Christian community because you are concerned about what others might think?
  
  - g. What does Jesus say is the consequence of this kind of hypocrisy?
  
  - h. What steps can you take to overcome these temptations?

4. Read Matthew 6:2. This is a practical example of Jesus' teaching in verse one.
  - a. Read the following passages: Deuteronomy 15:7; Proverbs 19:17; 1 John 3:17. What does the Bible teach about caring for the poor? How does Jesus reinforce this teaching in this verse and in verse 3?
  - b. How were the hypocrites in Jesus' example using this teaching of the Law?
  - c. What was their motivation?
  - d. Can you give examples of how the unbelieving world practices this same kind of hypocrisy? How does it show up in church circles?
  - e. In what ways might you be tempted to practice charity as a means of winning approval?
  - f. What is the reward the hypocrites received? In what way did they receive it in full?
  - g. Why is this reward a temporary illusion?
  
5. Read Matthew 6:3-4.
  - a. What do you think Jesus means by not letting your left hand know what your right hand is doing?
  - b. What is the purpose of this practice?
  - c. In the application of Jesus' teaching in these verses, how might we be tempted to fall into the same kind of legalistic thinking/practice Jesus was identifying throughout 5:21-47.
  - d. What are some practical steps you could take to appropriately practice what Jesus is teaching concerning your own giving?
  - e. Why will it take faith for you to be fully satisfied with God's approval?
  - f. What kind of disordered emotions might you experience if you are focused on winning the approval of others by what you do or do not do?
  - g. How do these questions of faith connect with Hebrews 11:6?