Command #19: Do your good deeds before God, not people.

Matthew 6:1-6 and 16-18 // Jerry Barber

Condensed Version

Read Matthew 6:1-18 and discuss these questions with your disciple(s):

1. In this passage, what words and phrases are repeated multiple times?
2. As you re-read the passage, does Jesus command giving, praying and fasting? Why not?
3. What does this passage teach us about God?
4. What does this passage teach about the “rewards” given to people who do things to be noticed by people rather than for God alone?

Study: (answers follow below)

1. Meditate on Matthew 6:1-6 and 16-18 (we will cover verses 7-15 during the 40 days of prayer) and make several observations about the passage.
2. In this passage, what words and phrases are repeated multiple times?
3. As you re-read the passage, does Jesus command giving, praying and fasting? Why not?
4. What does this passage teach us about God?
5. What does this passage teach about the “rewards” given to people who do things to be noticed by people rather than for God alone?
6. Based on Jesus’ teaching here, complete the following sentence: “It is not enough to do the right things; we must do them . . . “

Answers:

1. Answers will vary.
2. Reward, Father (in Heaven), when you \_\_\_\_\_
3. No, Jesus does not command giving, praying and fasting here. He uses these three as examples of good deeds that were very important to Jewish people of that day. He assumes that God’s people will be doing these things.
4. God is our Father; God sees everything we do; God knows why we do what we do; God rewards those whose motives are pure.
5. People who do things to be noticed by people rather than for God alone will indeed receive some reward, some human reward, but that is it.
6. “For the right reason,” or “with the right motives.”

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Worship:

The heart behind these commands is that God sees and knows us. All humans crave recognition. Jesus is teaching us not to look for recognition from human beings but from God our Heavenly Father. And the GOOD NEWS, the GOSPEL, is that Jesus gives that kind of attention and recognition to his children. Reflect on this truth, meditate on Romans 5:1-11 and Hebrews 6:10, and write out a prayer of worship to God in response to this great truth:

Obey:

Consider what you need to know and do in order to put this command into practice. After writing down some of your ideas, consider these two things:

1. All that Christ has done for you, and the way God the Father sees and knows everything.
2. Evaluate your motives. Why do you do what you do? Only you can answer this question.

Train:

1. Talk to those you are sharing with about motivation. Work together to probe some matters of the heart, and not just external actions.
2. Pray together for pure hearts.