



Heart Check

Description

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. (Matthew 6:1)

It's so interesting that Jesus just got done sharing 9 steps to a life of righteousness and now He moves on to a warning. Jesus examines the motives behind three common acts among the Jews. He talks this over with the disciples because He wants to make sure the motives of their hearts are right. It's great to know the steps of a righteous life, but we also need to understand the attitude behind it to do it well. Let's take a look at the next three items and see what kind of attitude we should exhibit.

1. Giving to the Needy (vs. 1-4)

Now it's very important to stop and look at the first verse. The verse from above. God's not going to strike you dead if your attitude is wrong. He's not going to hate you or turn His back on you. The thing that will happen is that if you seek your reward on this earth, then you simply will not receive it in Heaven. What's more important to you? A temporary reward here on earth that lasts maybe a moment or an eternal reward that lasts forever! I can guarantee you the eternal reward will well worth the wait.

Then Jesus goes on to talk about the "hypocrites" who give, just to be honored by men. They even announce it on the street. Well, who are the hypocrites? The hypocrites are the Pharisees and the Scribes. Their greatest weakness was a longing for man's praise and approval. They looked to man more than God. Jesus called His disciples to have a life that looked different from this. He wanted them to be set apart! Men who gave without seeking a reward on earth. He calls us to do the same. Will we give knowing that the greatest reward is an eternal one?

2. Prayer (vs. 5-8)

Again, Jesus is calling His disciples to lead a different life than the Pharisees. He does not want them to pray to be heard. He wants their prayers to matter to God alone. It does not mean that you never

pray in public or ever offer prayer to someone. If that was the case, then the early church really misunderstood what Jesus was saying. And that's hard to believe since they were there, hearing these very words. They understood Him. They knew His heart. Yes, go ahead and pray! But make sure that your motives are right! Prayer is an opportunity to express your heart to God and hear His for you. It's an opportunity to lay your burdens down at His feet! Wow, don't miss the greatness of prayer.

3. Fasting (vs. 16-18)

Jesus continues to point out how the Pharisees like to do things. The Pharisees just love to get noticed. They would fast and make sure that it was noticeable somehow on their faces. It took away the unbelievable experience they could have had with God. Fasting is something that is personal. It's about prayer and supplication before God. It's an opportunity to get real before God. It's saying "no" to your body, when all you want to do is say "yes". It's allowing God to reach in and change your heart. It's an amazing time to get a fresh perspective and see what God would have for your life moving forward. There are many examples in the Bible. I would be happy to share them with you, if you drop me a line.

Now don't get me wrong. If God calls you to fast and you want to have someone hold you accountable. That's great! We are to here hold each other accountable! We are brothers and sisters in Christ! Jesus was more concerned about the matters of the heart and what the attitude portrayed. We always need to give ourselves a heart check. As long as the heart checks out okay, everything is good!

How is your heart checking out? Are you saving your rewards for Heaven?

Challenge: Read Matthew 6:1-18

Memory Verse: 1 Peter 1:15-16 or 1 Peter 1:13-16

Dear Father God, I ask You to check my heart. Please find any trace of me that's not glorifying You and remove it. Help me to identify the wrong attitudes within my heart. I desire to save up my rewards for Heaven. May I seek Your face and what really matters. All this earth stuff is Yours. I look forward to being with You one day and hearing those beautiful words, "Well done, thy good and faithful servant!" Then this will all be worth it!

Just getting my Heart Checked out,

Category

1. Following Jesus

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