



Sermon  
Discussion  
Guide

Sunday, February 18, 2024

# More Than a Good Idea

## Giving, Prayer & Fasting

### Read/Reflect

1. Read Matthew 6:1-18 (or vs 1-6, 16-18). What is Jesus referring to when he talks about acts of righteousness (see also Matthew 5:20)?
2. Jesus talks about reward each time he addresses one of the three “righteous acts” (vs 2, 4; vs. 5,6; vs 16,18). What reward is Jesus talking about in these instances?

### Explore

3. Which of the three spiritual disciplines that Jesus talks about here appeal to you the most? What is your motive (or motives) for doing that practice? What is your motive for not doing the others? What reward might you be missing out on? Can we ever have a completely pure motive for our faith practices?
4. What do you think of when Jesus speaks of the act of “giving?” What are possible motives for giving?

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Support the cause     | <input type="checkbox"/> Duty (the right thing to do) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Compassion for others | <input type="checkbox"/> Ego (makes me feel good)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Guilt (I should)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Need (just want to share)    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surrender my wealth   | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                 |
5. Jesus warns against the motive for praying in public. How might being afraid to pray in public receive the same admonition?
6. What contributes to your prayer life being healthy? What hinders you from a healthy prayer life?
7. How do you regard the spiritual discipline of fasting? How does Jesus’ encouragement to fast in Matthew 6:16-18 compare to the prophecy about fasting in Isaiah 58:1-9?

### Pray

- Pray that in your “acts of righteousness” God will purify your motives so that your giving, your prayer life, and your fasting will flourish.
- Lord our God, let us lose ourselves in seeking your will and find ourselves by way of tracing your pattern for our lives. If by the way you make us shine – if your glory should make us luminous – O Lord, let us be the last to know. Through Christ we pray, Amen.
- Pray the Lord’s Prayer