

God Time Day 1: An Inside Job



Our world makes judgments about good and bad based on how things feel or how they will benefit us in the moment. This allows many people to become famous and popular despite a lack of internal character. Eventually, this lack of character comes to light. True character and righteousness begins on the inside and then reveals itself on the outside.



Read Matthew 6:1

Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven.

Draw a box around the four words after “Otherwise.”



What comes to mind when you think of the consequences of “no reward with your Father in heaven?”

Jesus emphasizes the need to focus on the heart rather than appearances – to please God rather than try to impress people. Some of His strongest words were spoken against religious people who worked hard to appear righteous – Jesus called them “*whitewashed tombs full of dead men’s bones.*” (Matthew 23:27)

As you consider several different spiritual practices this week (giving, praying, fasting), spend time thinking about ways your life demonstrates your commitment to God.

How much of what you do is in the public eye versus behind the scenes?



What will you do this week to practice righteousness in secret?

God Time Day 2: Giving In Secret



Nearly every sports stadium is named after its corporate sponsors and buildings are often named in honor of major donors (hospitals, universities, etc.). Even public radio will call out the names of their donors. It’s all part of a “pay for play” way of doing things.



Read Matthew 6:2-4

²So whenever you give to the poor, don’t sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. ³But when you give to the poor, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

What reward comes to those who give with publicity?

What reward comes to those who give in secret?



How would explain these verses in your own words?

The way that you give is a strong indicator of the state of your heart. If you do good merely to gain the praise of others, it shows that you are grasping for approval rather than living with the knowledge that God already approves of you because of Jesus – He IS your righteousness.

Plan to do something loving for someone else without anyone knowing it was you. Afterward, spend time talking to God about the experience.

Resist the temptation to tell someone else about your giving.



God Time Day 3: Praying In Secret



Read Matthew 6:5-8

⁵Whenever you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, because they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. ⁶But when you pray, go into your private room, shut your door, and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. ⁷When you pray, don't babble like the Gentiles, since they imagine they'll be heard for their many words. ⁸Don't be like them, because your Father knows the things you need before you ask him.



What reward comes to those who pray to be “seen by people?”

What is different about a prayer done in secret?

God Time Day 4: Fasting In Secret



Read Matthew 6:16-18

¹⁶Whenever you fast, don't be gloomy like the hypocrites. For they make their faces unattractive so that their fasting is obvious to people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting isn't obvious to others but to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Underline the first phrases of verses 16 & 17.



What is the use of the word “when” implying? (Vs 17)

When was the last time you fasted for spiritual purposes?



This week's Go2 emphasis is Fast & Pray. We are skipping one meal and spending that time praying for those we know who don't know Jesus. For more info: CBCFamily.net/go2

God Time Day 5: From the Inside Out



Re-read Matthew 6:1 from Day 1

What have you learned this week about practicing righteousness in secret?

A major theme in Jesus' teachings is the emphasis on the heart versus following a list of rules. (Remember the “*you have heard it said. . . but I say to you*” passages?). Part of the reason for this focus is to get people to think in terms of eternal (heavenly) rather than temporary (earthly) reward.



Read 2 Corinthians 4:18

So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Based on this verse, what will be the result of any good deeds performed so that they may be seen?

Jesus again speaks to the priority of the heart compared to the rules and demands of the religious leaders.



Read Matthew 23:25-26

²⁵ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside of it may also become clean.

In verse 26, what must be done before the outside (visible) can become clean?



What choices are you making to prioritize the “cleaning” of your inner life? (E.g., giving, praying, and fasting in secret from Days 1-4)
