

# The Act of Giving | Family Worship Guide

Matthew 6:1-4



**MAIN IDEA:** Jesus calls us to closely examine the *motives* of our hearts when we are practicing the spiritual discipline of giving.

## PREPARATION:

Share about a time when you had to do something and you knew someone significant was watching you. This could be a sporting event with a recruiter in the stands, a spelling B or school competition, or putting together a presentation at work to present to your boss. Have all who are willing share, then ask these questions:

How did you feel knowing that someone important was watching you?

Do you think it made you perform better or worse?

## EXPLANATION:

In chapter five Jesus clarifies the Pharisee's wrong teachings of the law saying, "You have heard that it was said....but I tell you..." In chapter six Jesus begins to address the spiritual disciplines of the Pharisees. He calls these spiritual disciplines ways to "practice [our] righteousness." While we can look forward to his teachings on praying and fasting, he first chooses to address the practice of giving.

In Jesus's time, the religious leaders who were hypocrites would draw attention to themselves in the synagogues and the streets making it evident to all that they were giving to the needy; they would do this to show others how "righteous" they were. Their motive was to gain the praise and respect of other people. But Jesus teaches us that the outward appearance of righteousness does not always indicate that someone is truly righteous on the inside.

We too can be quick to fall into the trap of doing "good" things for the momentary recognition and praise of others. We can be tempted to advertise our own sacrifices of money, time, and resources in conversations or on social media for the sake of the "likes" of others, but Jesus warns us to beware of our own **motives**.

Just as Jesus says to cut off our hands and gouge out our eyes, He again uses a hyperbole (an exaggeration) to emphasize His point. He says, "Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret." Be so sneaky in your giving that you even fool yourselves! In other words, we should give of ourselves generously and cheerfully - motivated not by multiple human onlookers, but by the single, most-important Onlooker who "sees in secret" and "will reward you."

## CONVERSATION:

Is it better to seek praises of others or rewards from our Father in heaven? Why?

Does this contradict what Jesus says in Matthew 5:16 when He instructs us to "let our light shine before others, so that they may see [our] good works and give glory to [our] Father in heaven?" Why or why doesn't it contradict?

We might be tempted to add "altruistic giving" to our "Righteousness Checklist," but are our motives always pure and selfless? What does this tell us about our default state of righteousness, and how has God bridged the gap to clothe us in His righteousness?

**APPLICATION:**

What are some practical ways we can check our motives when we give?

What does giving in secret look like practically when we give of our money? Our time? Our resources?

**SUPPLICATION:**

Lord, thank you for teaching us how to give in a way that is pleasing to you. Teach us to give generously and cheerfully in the ways that you lead us, and help us to examine our motives when we do. Thank you, Father, giving to us. You knew that we would never be able to live in perfect righteousness, and you gave Jesus to reveal your righteousness and bring us to yourself by His death on the cross.

**EXULTATION:**

Jesus Paid It All

<https://youtu.be/Hs5AtP2wd8>

I hear the savior say  
Thy strength indeed is small  
Child of weakness, watch and pray  
Find in me thine all in all

Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe  
Sin had left a crimson stain  
He washed it white as snow

Lord, now indeed I find  
Thy power and thine alone  
Came and changed the lepers spots  
And it melt the heart of stone

Jesus paid it all  
All to him I owe  
Sin had left a crimson stain

He washed it white as snow  
He washed away

And when before the throne  
I stand in him complete  
Jesus died my soul to save  
My lips shall still repeat

Jesus paid it all  
All to him I owe  
Sin had left a crimson stain  
He washed it white as snow  
Oh He washed  
Yeah He washed it white as snow

Oh, praise the one who paid my debt  
And raises life up from the dead