



Title: Beware of Giving

Text: Matthew 6:1-4

CONTEXT |

Remember, the main idea of the Sermon on the Mount is found in vv. 17-20. To enter the kingdom, now and for eternity, we must have a righteousness greater than the Scribes and Pharisees. This perfect righteousness is only found in Jesus. He alone fulfilled the Law. But if we are truly followers of Jesus, he explains what that should look like. We looked at several ways that the religious leaders missed the spirit of the Law in their efforts to keep it in chapter 5. Chapter 6 begins with a new emphasis, that gets more directly to our motive. Jesus shows us that he cares about *why* we do something perhaps even more than he cares about *what* we do—and in chapter 5 we know he cares a lot about what we do!

MAIN IDEA |

You should give as an expression of love, not to exalt yourself.

KEY VERSE |

¹ “Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.”

(Matthew 6:1 ESV)

DISCUSSION QUESTION IDEAS |

- Can you think of a time when you did something good for the wrong reason?
- What is so dangerous about giving (and other good works) that we do for the wrong reason?
- Was there anything in the sermon or in this in these verses that God spoke directly to you?
- In light of these verses, and perhaps others you know, how would you sum up the biblical guidelines for Christian giving?
- What are some practical ways we can constantly confront our tendency to exalt self?
- How should the teaching in 6:1-18 shape the way we share the gospel with the lost?
- **Pray:** for God to intensify our love for Himself and our compassion for the great spiritual and physical needs of others. Ask him to direct us to specific ways in our community and among the unreached peoples of the world to be His hands and feet.

EXPLANATION |

As we come to this section, we must hold in tension what Jesus instructed us in 5:16. There he said we should let our good works shine before others. Here he says beware doing things to be seen by others. Even when we do good things, such that would be pleasing to God, we often do them for the wrong reason—to exalt ourselves. He challenges us to consider our motives in giving, prayer and fasting.

To be clear, Jesus expects us to give of what he has entrusted to us. This should be a normal practice for Christians. When we give it isn't exceptional, it is reasonable in light of our love for God and for people in need—both material and spiritual. We should be grateful that we can be part of God's work through giving.

The improper motives that Jesus confronts are giving to be praised by others and giving to pat ourselves on the back. If these are our goal, then Jesus says you will receive that as your reward. But, He says you will miss out on the real reward. You will miss out on the perfect reward the Father wants to give to you as His child.