

READ

Matthew 6:1-4; 16-18

CONSIDER

In this section of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns us, “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them” (Matt 6:1). People can misread this as a call to privatize our faith and not practice our righteousness publicly (aka live out our faith). It is actually a call to reflect on our motivations and whether we are seeking God’s glory or the praise of people.

The reality of being human is that we will have mixed motivations. We want to serve God alone but inevitably we struggle to avoid seeking the praise of people. So how do we navigate this challenge? The key is found in the hiddenness principle that Jesus lays out for us alongside a call to reflection. Reflecting on our motives is how we do the right thing (practicing righteousness) for the right reasons. If you want to practice doing that, please check out the prayer section below for a spiritual exercise.

See you Sunday.

Pastor Tim Sreedharan

PRAY

Practicing our Righteousness: a spiritual exercise in prayer

Begin with a time of reflection: Where do I struggle with mixed motivations?

Then move into a time of confession. Ask God, what do I need to confess to you? How have my mixed motivations hindered me from living solely for your glory.

Then finish with a prayer of surrender. For example, “Christ, even as I struggle with mixed motivations, please help me. I need your strength to do what you have called me to do. Enable me to do it for your glory alone. Give me eyes only for you. Amen.”

As we spend time reflecting on our motivations, may it move it into confession and surrender as Christ reshapes our motivations to give us eyes for Him alone.

DIVING DEEPER

Week 5

Before we dive in...

Matthew 6:16-18

(The Values of the Kingdom)

Have you ever fasted before and what was it like?
What is your perception of fasting?

- **Read 6:16-18.** This is the third section about not practicing your righteousness in front of others (**6:1-4** about giving and **6:5-8** about praying). Why is it important to practice hiding your righteousness before others? What is the danger of others seeing us practicing our righteousness?
- Rich Villodas talks of the power of practicing the art of hiddenness; practicing the way of Jesus without the need to be seen and affirmed by others. Do you think this is right? Should we fast without telling others?
- If you want to learn more about rewards, [click here](#).
- How do the spiritual practices in **Matthew 6** (giving, praying, fasting) help us to love God and love others?