



DAILY DEVOTION

Hey, North Ridge Family! Here are this week's Daily Devos. Our hope is that you will process each of these devos according to how you can respond and love on your family and our city.

DAY 1

READ MATTHEW 6:1

To create some context, caring for the poor was considered an important duty in Jewish culture. Giving to the poor was not just personal and direct, in Jesus' time, many Jewish communities had organized a community chest to care for the poor. Therefore, it became a matter of pride to be seen giving.

Let's explore this word "righteousness." It means "being acceptable to God." In fact, the phrase in this verse, "practicing your righteousness" could be translated to "making yourself look acceptable to God." We can't make ourselves acceptable to God, but for the Jews, it became a matter of pride, a matter of appearances. And the reward was to be seen by others. They were receiving their self-worth by promoting themselves to look better than reality; to look generous in the eyes of others, rather than God.

It is no different today. We use social media to share our accomplishments with the world, to have our moment of fame. We make ourselves look better to the world. We point to ourselves, not to God. We self-promote rather than God-promote. We must remember our acceptability to God comes not from how we are seen by others, but how God sees us. It is our heart condition.

How can we be God righteous, not self-righteous?



DAY 2

READ MATTHEW 6:2

Have you ever heard the saying “Don’t toot your own horn?” Matthew 6:2 is where this saying comes from. Jesus continues this theme of self-promotion in verse two. He is alluding to two practices during his day: the first is that when important people arrived, they were announced by trumpets. Although the Jews might not literally be sounding a trumpet when they gave, Jesus is using this as a metaphor to point out how they would often make a big show of their giving. The second practice had to do with the way they gave—much like our giving boxes at the doors, their giving receptacles were made of metal, but were shaped like the end of a trumpet. It had a wide opening to catch money as it was dropped in. Remembering that their currency was metal, not paper, it made a lot of sound when more money was dropped in. Imagine pouring a bag of coins into our giving receptacles so all could hear what they were giving. Jesus points this out to show that it’s a form of boasting.

We’re not so different today. We also make a big show of giving: It is reported on the news, there might be a banquet or a ribbon cutting, or it might be posted on social media. We may not sound trumpets or dump bags of money in the giving boxes, but don’t we do it in other ways. We often jump at the chance to show off instead of highlighting what God is doing through us.

How do you blow the trumpet for God, not toot your own horn?

DAY 3

READ MATTHEW 6:2

So what is a hypocrite? Well in Jesus’ time, it was the word for an actor. In fact, it did not have a negative implication in Jesus’ culture like it does today. He was comparing the kind of giving that is done for the purpose of boasting to someone acting, which would have made sense to Jesus’ audience since there were theaters in all the nearby major cities. In fact, some historians believe that Jesus may have worked on building projects like the theatre in the city of Sephoris, near Nazareth.

Another detail is that actors in the Greek tragedies of that time would’ve worn masks to show their emotions to the audience. And an actor, a hypocrite, gained praise, self-worth, and ultimately income, from being someone they were not. When Jesus calls his audience hypocrites, He is literally saying, “you are an actor, putting on a mask, being someone you are not to gain the praise of man”

If we are followers of Christ, we can’t be hypocrites. We can’t walk around with a mask on, playing someone we are not. Instead, He is warning us to change our hearts, to be ourselves, and to look to God for our reward. We are to be who God calls us to be—His creation seeking His glory and ignoring the praise and glory of man; His image bearer.

How can you be God’s image bearer without being a hypocrite?

DAY 4

READ MATTHEW 6:3

This verse may seem confusing or even contradictory when compared to our earlier study on salt and light. Remember in Matthew 5:4-6 Jesus says, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

But in fact, it is not contradictory at all. Jesus is making the point that the giving of our resources, time and talents becomes part of our character. It's like speaking one's native language or riding a bicycle. When we spend time with Jesus, we become so transformed by Him that good deeds naturally flow out of us. We don't have to think a lot about our actions, and certainly not how they are going to benefit us, because we focus our attention on how our actions represent Jesus. When he says, "so that they may see your good works and give glory," he is saying that others will notice our good deeds and will see Jesus in them, rather than seeing someone bragging or promoting themselves. Our actions should come from a place of loving God and others so consistently, that we don't even have to think about it.

How can our actions be visible to the world and give glory to God, but become invisible to us?

DAY 5

READ MATTHEW 6:4

In verse 4 we see how God responds to this change in our character-the heart transformation that He wants to see in how we give. The word "secret" here in Greek is "kryptos," which is where the word "encryption" comes from. It is not about being invisible, but instead only caring about how God views our giving. Only He sees our heart and our motivations.

As Guinness the Christian Philosopher puts it;

The greatest deeds are done before the Audience of One, and that is enough.

Jesus is calling us to give above and beyond, without regard for who is watching; to be so transformed by love that we don't notice what we are doing. If we can love this way, give this way, and strive to be God's image-bearers in all that we do, then we are truly in fellowship with Him. He then allows us to be His creative partner, multiplying our deeds for His glory.

And it forces us to ask ourselves this question: *Would I still do this, give this if no one would ever know I did it?*

Do you have someone to hold you accountable, to discover Jesus with, to walk with you during difficult times? Have you considered creating a DNA group- three people of your same gender, committed to meeting weekly to discover, nurture, and act on your relationship with Jesus, together?

Contact brad@northridgenow.org for more information on forming a DNA Group.