

March 15, 2015
Religion vs Spirituality
Secret In the Service
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Matthew 6

The assumptions

2 Cor 8:7 2 Cor 8:8-9 Col 4:2

Don't toot your own horn

James 4:6 Matt 23:25-28

The best reward

Luke 8:10-14 Matt 6:33

Do you ever see someone who does lots of things for people in order to gain attention? How does that make you feel? What if you're on the receiving end of that action, how would you feel?

In our social media saturated culture, we have a tendency to post up everything we do.

Is this a good thing, a bad thing, or just a thing?

What has been the subject of our worship these last few weeks?

What is the underlying honor message in Matthew chapter 6?

How does God receive honor from righteous deeds?

Read Matthew 6:16-18

It has been said that God is subtle.

Read Matthew 8: 1 - 4

Why do you think God is interested in secret service?

Giving is one important area of our Christian service. Why do you give? Is it to impress others or to please God? Examine your heart. Can you share how you feel when you place your envelope in the offering plate on Sunday morning? Do you do so with a prideful attitude or with a grateful, humble spirit? Do you do so expecting a return? Why? Some churches publish their members' giving records. In light of scripture in Matthew 6:1-4 and Acts 4:36-37, is it ever proper that others know what you give? Explain your answer. Be sure your motives are not as the Pharisees, who sought to look good in the eyes of others, but had little effect on the inside.

Giving is not about us, but to give glory to God. Read Matthew 23:25-28. Don't get caught up in how much you give, but the attitude with which your gift is given.

Another area of service is our prayer life. Read Colossians 4:2. We know that God longs for a relationship with us and to hear from us in prayer, but how do you think it makes God feel when we treat him like a Santa Claus with only selfish requests to meet our

purposes? How much more effective might our prayers be if we prayed according to Jesus' model Prayer?

Read Matthew 6:9-15

What does this say about how we begin times of prayer?

What parts of this prayer stand out to you? Why?

How might following this example change the focus of our prayers?

How is it different than the normal "church" prayer?

How does prayer impact acts of righteousness?

Fasting is a spiritual discipline that is not widely practiced in a day of seeking whatever brings us pleasure, but it is both noble and difficult. It is never popular to deny ourselves, but Jesus knew that fasting helps us to focus on things that feed the soul and not the body. It teaches us self-discipline and reminds us we can live with a lot less and it helps us to appreciate God's gifts.

Here again we are reminded not to do so to gain public approval, but to do it unto God to honor him. Can anyone share a personal experience of spiritual growth from fasting?

This all brings us back to why we do spiritual acts of service.

The Kingdom of God spreads through the believer's concern and eagerness to help others. By joining with other believers to do God's work, we increase Christian unity and help the Kingdom grow.

Would you share a personal blessing you have received from being involved in serving others or from being served?

Think about what you can do that is meaningful to someone else but doesn't draw attention to yourself.