



THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

FAMILY DEVOS

What's Your Why?

Scripture: Matthew 5:6:1-6

Memory Verse: Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers,
For they shall be called sons of God.”

For My Family:

It's not hard to imagine someone posting a video or photo of themselves performing an act of kindness to someone in need. This has become a very popular thing to do. But think for a moment about why you know many of those stories. You know them because the people doing those acts of kindness wanted you to know that they did them! The Pharisees did the same thing in Jesus' day. They gave in a way that made sure everyone would see their good works and praise *them*. They did same thing with prayer and fasting. The things God had intended to be done for His glory were done selfishly for their own glory.

Jesus uses the word “hypocrite” to describe this type of behavior. It is important for us to understand what this word means as we will see it again and again in the Bible, especially the book of Matthew. A hypocrite is a pretender. An actor. Someone who appears to be one way, but is another way on the inside. Can you think of any examples of this? The Pharisees prayed in public to be seen and heard by men, not God. When they fasted, they made it obvious so everyone would know. People would think, “Wow! What a man of God! Look at how he prays and fasts!” Jesus says that that admiration is all the reward they will get.

But followers of Jesus are to have a different motive, a different “why” behind their actions. Why are we kind, why do we pray, why do we fast (take note that Jesus assumes we will do all of these things)? To please and bring glory to our Father in heaven! We don't need the applause of people, because God applauds us when we serve Him and love others privately, and that is all the applause we need. Isn't it amazing to know that when you take time even to pray to God by yourself that He will give you eternal rewards for doing so? The most amazing stories of acts of kindness to others and faithfulness to God throughout history have remained untold and unseen. But God has seen and heard. He sees and hears what is done in secret, and those who give and pray and fast for Him will receive an eternal reward.

Do you love God with all your heart? Do you love your neighbor as yourself? Or do you simply love yourself? How you draw attention to yourself is a good test for us as we think about the answers to those questions. It is not wrong to be seen or heard doing good things. That was the point of Matthew 5:16! But the reason for our being seen is so that those around us would glorify our Father in heaven, not ourselves. It feels good to be accepted by others, and that's not always wrong. But it is a wrong motive. Above all, we must be sure that we are doing is what is pleasing and acceptable to God both in public and in private.

Questions for Young Children:

Does God see and hear you even when no one else does?

Jesus said not to be like the hypocrites. What does hypocrite mean?

What is a way that you can help someone secretly this week?

Questions for Teens and Pre-teens:

What motivates your actions throughout the day? (Go through a list of the things you do each day and list why you do them.)

Is it wrong when people post pictures/videos of themselves doing good things? Why or why not?

Does knowing that God sees you and will reward you for private acts of obedience and service motivate you? Why or why not?