

Hiddenness

The Pharisees were known not only for how they strictly followed each letter of the law but also for taking the opportunity to practice that law in front of others. The problem with this was not that they were *seen* doing good, but that they were doing good *to be seen*. In one of Jesus' most famous teachings — the Sermon on the Mount — he confronts this way of doing good head-on. His counteroffer? We must start keeping secrets between us and our Heavenly Father — the good kind — especially if we hope to discover the rewards that only he can give.

Read Matthew 6v2-4

Discuss the Scripture

- 01 How do you notice our surrounding culture doing good “to be honored by others”?
- 02 What do you find most often motivates you to serve others in life? How does this teaching from Jesus align with or confront those motives?
- 03 What is most challenging for you personally about the prospect of doing good in secret?
- 04 Though it is a great mystery, what have you experienced to be the Father’s rewards for the good you have done in secret?

Discuss the Practice

- 01 On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is recognition to you when doing good for other people? What are your reflections on your number?
- 02 How do you think people can fend off the apathy and bitterness that sometimes follow good deeds that go unrecognized?
- 03 How did this act of hidden service influence your view or experience of God’s approval versus human approval?
- 04 If you were to continue serving others often in unseen ways, what kind of person would that form you into?

Repeat the Exercise

For this week, we invite you to repeat the exercise on page 47, or to try the reach exercise there if you have not already.