

## Come and Become pt 12: Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Me

-Matthew 6:1-6 Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2 “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

5 “And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

### **Problem: We are all familiar with the subtle lure of recognition and approval.**

#### **-Verse Breakdown:**

**-announced with trumpets:** at the synagogues they had these trumpets that sounded different blasts based on the amount given

*-Jesus references this in another place when he mentions a widow who only gave 2 mites, but her gift was more generous than the wealthy man who gave much more,,, she gave from her need, and him from his excess*

***-how did Jesus know what she or the rich man gave?***

***-it was the length of the trumpet blast***

-Imagine the added motivation to give generously in a church offering if the worship team launched in to a musical celebration of your greatness bases on your gift

*-that is essentially what was going on*

**-public prayers:** the issue is not so much their location, but their heart,,, they looked for opportunities to showcase their spirituality

*(they don't “happen to be” in public when praying they are deliberately in public when praying)*

-technically they were praying to their father in heaven, but IN REALITY this prayer was addressed to the people standing around

—Jesus warns about doing things that appear to be directed toward God but are actually motivated by the hope of being seen by people:

-doing good deeds    -giving money.    -helping people    -taking a moral stance

-even our prayers and other “spiritual practices” can be motivated by this desire for admiration from people

-There are also non religious versions of this:

-do neighborly things not to be neighborly but to be thought of in a certain way

-help people with things not for the sake of helping but for the sense of superiority it gives

-we can volunteer in community organizations, not for the actual benefit of doing it,,, but for the influence it buys us

*-There are funny versions of this also:*

-many of you would never pick your nose,,, **in public**.....

-you would like to think and would like others to think that you are not the kind of person who picks their nose..... but in fact you might be the kind of person who doesn't pick their nose in view of other people....

**-In this section Jesus is not correcting bad actions. He is now dealing with Good Actions from questionable motives.**

*-Do motives matter? If I do good things, shouldn't that be enough?*

**-Illustration:** Imagine you work for a company as an engineer making 38 \$ per hour, or about 80k a year.

-But between student loans, mortgage, cars, & family,,, you need more \$

-your company is hiring part time janitors, at 10 \$ per hour

-you apply and get that Job also

**-lets pretend your company still uses time clocks and cards**

-You now have 2 different time cards

-one for Steve the Engineer who makes \$38 for every hour he is on the clock

-one for Steve the Janitor who makes \$10 dollars for every hour on clock

-You may not think it matters which card you clock in with when you do your work, but I guarantee your bosses will.

-they are going to be mad if you are clocked in as an engineer and spend the afternoon mopping

-the heads of those departments wont like it either if their department is paying you to work in the other department.....

**God does not reward actions motivated by something other than him, regardless of how good the action appears.**

-If looking good to other people is really the motive behind a good action then you are **Clocked in, working for yourself.**

**-that is you serving you, not you serving God**

*-in the same way that the supervisor of the engineering department doesnt want to pay you 38\$ an hour to wash windows,,, God does not reward us when the things we claim to do FOR HIM are actually aimed at bringing **recognition to ourselves.***

-Jesus said that when people then turn to praise you, (*“wow, you are so generous,,, you are such a good person*). you have received, in that moment, all the reward you are going to get.

-you might have been hoping that you would somehow get paid for both, your engineer’s salary AND your janitor salary, but you won’t

**-You cannot seek both forms of reward. When you try for both, you default to the lesser of the two.**

-When you try to serve God and yourself through good deeds you end up serving only yourself.

-It makes me sad to think so many people might be doing so many right things, but we are CLOCKED IN for the wrong boss.

-our improper motive vastly cheapens all we do

**-This whole thing hinges on our Intention.**

-it is not that, if people recognize or admire you, that you get no reward from God

-IT IS that if you were aiming at recognition, then you get no reward from God.

-In Luke 16:15 Jesus shoots straight with Religious people.

-Luke 16:15 You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God’s sight.

-The fact that they placed so much value on Approval from other people was Detestable in God’s sight!

-Example:

*-Imagine if you had a husband or wife who was super affectionate and attentive; But **only when you are in front of people.***

*-when there is no audience they don’t even say a word to you*

*-off in their own world,,, only worried about themselves*

**-you would quickly realize that the way they treat you publicly has nothing to do with loving you, and everything to do with loving themselves.**

*-they love being seen as a Great Spouse and that is all...*

**-You would grow to RESENT every nice thing done in front of others**

*-every action would be further evidence of how little they loved you and how much they loved themselves*

*-When it is framed like that, why motives matter is obvious, but given how obvious that is,,, Why are our own motives often so hard to identify?*

## Understanding Motives is tricky & often requires a level of Insight we lack.

-In verse 2 Jesus warns us not to be like the Hypocrites.

-Hypocrites were Greek theater actors.....

**-this is the first time we have record of this term being used in a negative way**

-In fact Jesus is the only person in the New Testament to use the term Hypocrite and he uses it 17 times.

-Perhaps Jesus is the only one to use “Hypocrite” because he is the only one with the Insight to know when the term fits.

*-all over the gospels we are told that Jesus knew what was in people’s hearts*

-We must prayerfully and reflectively ask Jesus to ILLUMINATE our hearts and MOTIVES FOR US

-There are a few ways God Illuminates motives.

-sometimes God will ping our hearts.....

-often God uses other people to expose our bad motives

-Proverbs 27:6 the wounds of friend can be trusted, but enemies multiply kisses

-Has God ever used a trustworthy friend to wound you and point out gross motives for you?

*-perhaps you have pushed back*

-If we are mature enough to receive it God will use conflict to expose bad motives

-James 4:1 tells us that fights and quarrels among us are actually caused by Evil desires at war within us

-If we are Mature,,, as we bump into others in Conflict,,, Mature people will ask themselves,,,,, “Is this caused or aided, to any degree, by improper motives or desires in me?”

*-Batting Average / Motive Average:*

-baseball players have a batting average that tells you how many of their opportunities at bat they made good use of

-that number tells you objectively how good they are as a hitter

**-imagine if we had a number showing on average how often our intentions were good vs. bad**

-What is already obvious to God, would become obvious to us.

*-knowledge like that would not be pleasant but it could be very helpful*

**-Imagine if we were able to more clearly see and correct our motives:**

-God rewards good and faithful deeds,,, but not deeds done for self centered reasons

-imagine if our level Good deeds didn’t even change but if our motives were good, 20 or 30% more

-The occasional trickle of Reward from heaven could turn into a Monsoon

- *But this is bigger than just Reward and Blessing?*

## **Motive decides which Kingdom we Participate in, and which Kingdom Agenda we are advancing.**

-Living for the approval of other people is done for selfish reasons.

- we people please because it makes our life better or easier
- it prevents uncomfortable conversations
- people pleasing can socially beneficial ,, can make you more popular

-This is Paradoxical because we appear to be “about others” when in fact, we are “about others” so that they will be inclined toward us.

- at the end of it all it is a “me-motive”

## **-Self Serving intentions keep us in contention with God and others.**

-We can see the damage of self centeredness most clearly in the relationships closest to us.

- everyone has a long list of faults
- but what brings most of the resentment in close relationships is Self Centeredness
  - when a spouse doesn't care about what is important to you, simply because it is not important to them. (self centeredness)
  - when a spouse sits like a lump letting you bare most of the responsibilities at home. (self centeredness)
  - when our wants, interests, or what we feel like, is so important to us that it overrides another's : interests, desire, or what they feel like,,,,, that is Self Centeredness.

-That is the biggest obstacle between you and other people.

-There are going to be countless times and places where what Honors God or Advances the cause of Jesus will NOT ADVANCE YOUR CAUSE.

- Make you uncomfortable. -require you to overcome something in your life
- ask for some level of sacrifice of time or money or both
- it may require you put your personal dislike for someone or something aside

-The degree to which we are conditioned by Self Serving Motives is the Point at which our effectiveness for God's Kingdom ceases.

*-our love for him will run headlong into our love for ourselves.....*

-Self serving motives cause us to live in ways opposite of God's Kingdom Direction.

-The Bible talks about something called a "spirit of Anti-Christ".

-a spirit of Anti-Christ is not an agenda to put Satan on the throne of your life

-a spirit of Anti-Christ IS to put ME on the throne of my own life.

**-Satan isn't tricking us into allegiance to him, he is tricking us into allegiance to ourselves.**

-The direction of the polluting effect of sin is Self Exaltation.

-The direction of Redemption and Salvation is the Re-exaltation of God through Jesus.

-following the Kingdom of Jesus puts God back in the center, it submits my agenda to his agenda,, his agenda becomes my motives

-following the kingdom of this world is to put ME at the center, it submits God's agenda to my agenda,,, my agenda takes over my motives

**-Motives matter so much because they determine whether we are advancing the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Me.**

-the kingdom of me is the cloaked expression of evil for our time and cultural setting

*(Time Cards: Which Kingdom are we clocking in for?  
Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Me)*

-May God expose to us places where our Motive is secretly clocking us in for the Kingdom of Me

-May God begin today to Purify our Motives and Intentions.

-May he develop in us a greater ability to clock in for the Kingdom of God

**-All of us have 2 Time Cards. (Show the cards)**

-Every choice we make is Clocking In on one or the other.

-We are advancing the Kingdom of One Master or The Other

**-We are either advancing the cause of Jesus or SELF**

**-The point of this is NOT that we have to Hide our good deeds or spirituality.**

-the point is simply checking our motives and being sure WHO WE ARE REALLY SERVING.

-for many it might mean: “for a time” we slip out of the public eye doing our good things In Secret, until we can get a handle on our wily motives

**-But one cool thing about escaping into secret places is that, That is Where The Father Actually Resides.**

-In the Secret Places Filled with Private acts of Devotion and Obedience you will find a VIBRANT Connection and experience with your Father that was never present before an audience of other people.

*(show cards for last line)*

**-Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Me? Motive is Everything.**