

# WEEK 11 | MATTHEW 6:1-8; 16-18

## A BEAUTIFUL KINGDOM

As believers in Jesus Christ, and citizens of His Kingdom, we have the unique responsibility to reflect the glory of God to a watching world. In this series, we are studying Jesus's words in the Sermon on the Mount, considering what it means to flourish under His rule and reign, and live as His representatives where we work, live, and play. In chapter 6, Jesus addresses how our private motivations are connected to our public demonstrations of faith.

### OTHER HELPFUL PASSAGES.

The following passages may be helpful as you consider this text.

- **Proverbs 16:2** – God knows our hearts.
- **James 4:3** – We can pray with wrong motives.
- **Philippians 1:15** – We can even preach with wrong motives.
- **1 Corinthians 4:5** – God rewards a heart with pure motives.

### QUESTIONS.

Feel free to use any, all, or none of these questions as you facilitate your group. Their purpose is to be an aid to you as you consider how to teach the implications of this week's Scriptures.

#### **Part 1: Rewards (v. 1)**

1. What do you think Jesus means by rewards from our Father?
2. Is it wrong to practice faith in public? (see Daniel 6:10)

#### **Part 2: Giving (v. 2-4)**

3. What are modern ways of "sounding a trumpet" about giving?
4. Why is the praise of others an insufficient reward?

#### **Part 3: Praying (v. 5-8)**

*Definition:* Hypocrites were Greek actors who could play several different characters by wearing different masks.

5. When have you done the right things for the wrong reasons?
6. Can our motives ever be totally pure?
7. How do Jesus's words and example affect how we pray publicly? (John 11:41-42)
8. If we're not supposed to "heap up empty words," should all our prayers be short?
9. Is repetition in prayer a bad thing?

#### **Part 4: Fasting (v. 16-18)**

On fasting: In the Old Testament, the Day of Atonement was the only specifically commanded fast, but other fasts were common<sup>1</sup>, especially when praying for something important. (Esther 4:16)

10. Jesus says "when you fast" not "if you fast." Why do you think fasting has fallen out of practice for many Christians?

---

<sup>1</sup> *ESV Study Bible*, Crossway, 2008

11. In the Bible, believers often fasted together. How can you fast with others, while examining your motives.

## PRAY TO CLOSE.

Consider fasting and praying as a group for one meal this week. Chose something specific to pray for.

- Praise the Father who connects with us through generosity, praying, and fasting.
- Ask the Spirit to convict you of impure motives.
- Pray that we will give, pray, and fast like Jesus.