

IT'S ALL ABOUT HIM – NOT ABOUT YOU!

The emphasis of Christ's teaching is not the legalistic external keeping of the law, but rather being God-like in your character, which then works its way out in life. This God-oriented kind of living is stressed and fleshed out in Matthew chapter 6.

There are two great emphases in the Bible concerning faithful Christian living.

Orthodoxy: Right Doctrine

Orthopraxy: Right Living

This is a package! If one of these is missing, something is dreadfully wrong. Right doctrine (Matt. 5) must be lived out (Matt. 6). People can have right doctrine, but at the same time, it can be just all head knowledge. In that case, there is a HEART problem.

People can also be legalistically moralist which also presents a HEART problem. In either case, it gets back to the HEART. As Proverbs 4:23 says, ***“Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.”*** Life is all about “inside out”. What is going on in the HEART works its way out in the life.

Matthew 6:1 (NKJV)

1 “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

The older manuscripts have “your righteousness” instead of “your charitable deeds” here in verse 1.

The emphasis here is on PRACTICAL RIGHTEOUSNESS – how we should then live as Christ's disciples. And again, the contrast is between the legalistic righteousness of the scribes and pharisees and that being taught by Christ.

Matthew 5:20 (ESV)

20 For I tell you, unless **your righteousness** exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 6:1 (ESV)

1 “Beware of practicing **your righteousness** before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 6:1 sets the table for what is to follow. Christ is going to deal with three common aspects of Jewish piety, namely almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. In living out our righteousness, Christ is making a strong emphasis throughout that our MOTIVES are to be God-oriented and not self-oriented.

We are to practice righteous living, but it is not to be done in a showy or ostentatious way. Showy piety might impress people (maybe), but it definitely does NOT impress God. In fact, Jesus plainly says if you are putting on a show in acting so “holy” then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

The issue of “reward” is mentioned 9 times in the Sermon on the Mount.

This is the governing principle throughout that Christ is emphasizing here. Yes, we should be about living for God (orthopraxy), but we should not put on “airs” about it.

“There is a danger even in doing righteous things (dikaiousune) if one’s motive is to ‘be noticed’ by others.” ***Ed Glasscock***

Note throughout Christ is contrasting how His disciples (kingdom people) are to live now, in contrast to the religious hypocrites of the day.

Christ speaking of “***your Father***” must have been shocking to Jewish sensibilities. God is referred to as “Father” only 14 times in the OT, and then, only generally in a national sense. The Jews did not know God intimately on a “Fatherly” basis.

In contrast to the sparsity of the use of “Father” in the OT, Jesus used the term “Father” 17 times in the Sermon on the Mount and 10 times here in Matthew 6:1-18.

God as our Father emphasizes that we are His children and therefore share in His character, which is to be demonstrated in our lives. This is the secret to Christ’s deeper living out the moral sense of the law. God is now our Father! If we belong to God, we now share in His nature, and this should show in our lives, but we should not be showy about it. That is self-focused instead of God-focused.

Never forget: “It’s all about HIM, not about you.”