



Small Group Guide: The Forgotten Jesus

"Righteous Living"

Icebreaker

Share about a time when you received recognition for something you did. How did it feel? Now share about a time you did something good that no one knew about. How was that experience different?

Key Scripture

Matthew 6:1-4 (CSB) Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward with your Father in heaven. So whenever you give to the poor, don't sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be applauded by people. Truly I tell you, they have their reward. But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Main Takeaways

1. **Practice Your Righteousness** - Jesus expects Christians to actively live out their faith through good works, not to earn salvation but as evidence of it.
2. **The Hypocrite's Mask** - A hypocrite (from Greek "hypokritos") is someone who judges from behind a mask, pretending to be someone on the outside, they're not on the inside.
3. **Two Types of Rewards** - When we give, we receive a reward either from people's applause (immediate, temporal) or from God (eternal).
4. **The Right Hand/Left Hand Principle** - This hyperbolic statement means our giving should be so discreet and pure in motive that it's a private matter between God and us.

5. **The DVD of Life Illustration** - Only what we do genuinely for God will "make it to heaven" as rewards.
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

- What does Jesus mean by "practicing your righteousness"? How does this relate to the balance between grace and works?
- What were the five types of Pharisees mentioned in the podcast? Can you identify any modern equivalents in today's church culture?
- How does Matthew 5:16 ("let your light shine before others") relate to Matthew 6:1 ("don't practice your righteousness before others")? What's the difference Jesus is highlighting?

Personal Reflection

- The podcast mentioned that we all struggle with hypocrisy at different points. Share an area where you've caught yourself "wearing a mask" or doing something good for the wrong reasons.
- Think about social media culture. How does our current digital age make it easier to "sound a trumpet" before giving or doing good works? What are practical ways to guard against this?
- The podcast stated: "You can do the right thing with the wrong motivation and it's wrong." Can you think of an example from your own life where your motives were mixed when doing something good?

Going Deeper

- What does it mean that God "sees in secret"? How should this truth change the way we approach:
 - Giving to those in need
 - Serving in ministry
 - Treating our family members
 - Making sacrifices no one knows about
 - The podcast mentioned the "DVD of Life" illustration, that only things done genuinely for God would appear on it. If God played that DVD of your last month, what percentage of your actions would make it on there? What does this reveal about your heart?
 - Kandi mentioned we often put pressure on ourselves that God hasn't put on us. What pressures are you carrying that might be causing you to "perform" rather than serve from a pure heart?
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Closing Prayer

- Purity of heart and motive in all we do
- Freedom from the need for human approval
- Courage to remove our masks and live authentically
- Eyes to see opportunities to serve in secret this week