

Charitable Deeds (Matt. 6:1-4)

A Small Group Outline



1. Praise *(Purpose: To worship God)*

- What are you thankful for this week? *(let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Song Service
 - Sing a few songs of praise to God

2. Pray *(Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)*

- What challenges did you have this week? *(write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Go into a season of prayer

3. Review *(Purpose: To learn accountability)*

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? *(e.g. Who did your share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)*
- *Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.*

4. Give *(Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)*

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

5. Discover *(Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)*

• **Notes for the facilitator**

- Read *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings (MB)*, pp. 79-83
- "In the days of Christ the Pharisees were continually trying to earn the favor of Heaven in order to secure the worldly honor and prosperity which they regarded as the reward of virtue. At the same time they paraded their acts of charity before the people in order to attract their attention and gain a reputation for sanctity" (MB 79)
- Vs 2: **When** you do a charitable deed: Christ did not say **if** but **when**, i.e. He expects us to practise charity as Christians
- Vs 2: Hypocrites: The Greek word refers to an actors who wore different masks to play different roles. In the context of this passage Jesus is saying that a hypocrite is one who wears a false face, who pretends to honour God while in actual fact is honouring self (*George Knight, Walking with Jesus on the Mount of Blessing*)
- Vs 2: Do not sound a trumpet: That is, don't give great publicity to your good works
- Vs 3: Reward in full: The public affirmation and attention in this life is all they will get. That is, their reward is in this life, not the future life.
- "Jesus rebuked their ostentation, declaring that God does not recognize such service and that the flattery and admiration of the people, which they so eagerly sought, was the only reward they would ever receive" (MB 80)
- "While they [the people] claimed to be very jealous for the honor of the law, self-glory was the real object which they sought; and Christ would make it manifest to them that the lover of self is a transgressor of the law" (MB 79)
- Vs 3: "In these words Jesus did not teach that acts of kindness should always be kept secret. Paul the apostle, writing by the Holy Spirit, did not conceal the generous self-sacrifice of the Macedonian Christians, but told of the grace that Christ had wrought in them, and thus others were imbued with the same spirit. He also wrote to the church at Corinth and said, 'Your zeal hath stirred up very many.' 2 Corinthians 9:2, R.V." (MB 80)

- “Real godliness never prompts an effort at display. Those who desire words of praise and flattery, and feed upon them as a sweet morsel, are Christians in name only” (MB 80)
- Vs 3: “It is said that among the Arabs the right and the left hand are figurative of close friends. There is no need, Jesus says, for closest friends to know about one’s pious deeds (*SDA Bible Commentary*). So Jesus is here using a figurative expression to say: “Don’t broadcast your good deeds in order to get the praise and honour of people. God alone should get the glory.”
- “By their good works, Christ’s followers are to bring glory, not to themselves, but to Him through whose grace and power they have wrought.... When the light of Christ is shining in the soul, the lips will be filled with praise and thanksgiving to God. Your prayers, your performance of duty, your benevolence, your self-denial, will not be the theme of your thought or conversation. Jesus will be magnified, self will be hidden, and Christ will appear as all in all” (MB 80)
- “Sincerity of purpose, real kindness of heart, is the motive that Heaven values” (MB 81)
- Could the following modern day examples of the display of our good works that Jesus is speaking against in this passage?
 - As a result of my 4 week evangelistic campaign, preaching night after night, these wonderful souls are rejoicing in Jesus today. Praise the Lord!!
 - The church is beautifully carpeted and decorated because of the generous offerings my family has been giving to the Building Fund. God is so good!
 - I want to thank God that He has empowered me as an elder these past 20 years, to stabilise the church and get it on track evangelistically
- Vs 4: Your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly: There are 2 rewards we get as we minister selflessly for others:
 - We are rewarded with Jesus’ presence, and His character
 - We are presently enriched as we experience the satisfaction of being blessing others.
- “The work of beneficence is twice blessed. While he that gives to the needy blesses others, he himself is blessed in a still greater degree. The grace of Christ in the soul is developing traits of character that are the opposite of selfishness,—traits that will refine, ennoble, and enrich the life. Acts of kindness performed in secret will bind hearts together, and will draw them closer to the heart of Him from whom every generous impulse springs. The little attentions, the small acts of love and self-sacrifice, that flow out from the life as quietly as the fragrance from a flower—these constitute no small share of the blessings and happiness of life. And it will be found at last that the denial of self for the good and happiness of others, however humble and uncommended here, is recognized in heaven as the token of our union with Him, the King of glory, who was rich, yet for our sake became poor” (MB 82)
- God not only wants us to give secretly, but also cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:6, 7) and sacrificially (Mark 12:43, 44)
- *Read Matt. 6:1-4. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
- **Discussion Questions** (use only a few). *The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
 - Why do you think God is not just interested in the act of giving, but the motivation behind it as well?
 - What are some of the reasons that could motivate people to give, both good and bad?
 - Why is there, from a human perspective, a desire to want people to know what we have done for others?
 - Give some examples of giving that glorifies the giver?

- We are encouraged that our left hand should not know what our right hand is doing. Does this mean that all giving should be kept secret? Elaborate.
- What are examples of how Christians could be more secretive in their giving?
- What are different ways to give? Remember, money is only one way.
- How do you think God will reward us openly?
- In what way did Jesus live up to the principles shared in this passage?
- **Application Questions** (*select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
 - On a scale of 1-10, 1 being very stingy, and 10 sacrificially generous, how would you rate yourself? Why or why not?
 - Would you like to become a more giving person? Elaborate.
 - What steps could you take to ensure that your giving is not done for show?
 - *A question to silently ponder:* Does your bank statement reflect generous giving for God's cause, or largely for selfish indulgence?
 - **I WILL STATEMENT:** Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group's secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. "From this coming month, I will set aside 4% of my monthly salary to systematically give towards charitable projects."

6. Share (*Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith*)

- Do you have anyone you could share today's lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

7. Closing prayer

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