

# Bona Fide- Approval of One...Audience of One.

## Sermon Notes

### April 18, 2021

**\*Illustration:** A mentor who began a movement of churches collaborating together to reach high school students, but someone else took the credit and wrote a book saying so.

*All good things can be coopted by our sinful propensity to say "look at me".*

#### Sinful opportunities:

|                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Teaching the Word     | Public Prayer     |
| Leading a Bible study | Public Healing    |
| Discipling someone    | Fasting           |
| Helping a family out  | Giving generously |

*Spiritual leadership modeled a "public display of righteousness" that may have met needs but fell short of God's approval and blessing.*

#### Public charity is a double-edged sword. **Matthew 6:1-4**

- Public charity is likely and necessary.
  - Feeding of the five thousand.
  - Zacchaeus
  - Woman with two mites given at the temple along with others giving.
- Be careful of performing to an audience. (1)
  - The phrase "to be seen by them" comes from the same Greek root that our term "theater" comes from.
- Be careful of whose approval (honor) you seek. (2)
- Reward for charitable giving will either come from man or God. (3-4)

**Biblical Example** of double-edged sword: Barnabas vs. Ananias and Saphira **Acts 4:36-5:16**

*“No, Jesus does not reject public piety; he is rejecting public hypocrisy the falsely motivated act that seeks to give glory to the actor rather than God.”* Stuart Briscoe

### **Public praying can glorify God or discourage others. Matthew 6:5-8**

- Does the location matter to you when you pray?
- Who are you thinking of or who is the audience when you pray?
- Does your language and length take on an alternate personality when you pray?
  - Many words?
  - Many flowery words?
- The fruit of such public prayers can cause an inferior spirit for others who listen in.

**Biblical Example** of glory in prayer misplaced: Pharisee vs. Tax Collector **Luke 18:10-14**

### **Fasting is to align the heart not to attract God’s or man’s attention. Matthew 6:16-18**

- Pharisees fasted every Monday and Thursday.
- This became a means of establishing a public reputation of spiritual piety.
  - They would moan to receive pity.
  - They would not refresh the face to gain attention.
- Fasting’s purpose was to have hunger pangs serve as reminder of dependence upon something greater-God.
  - A re-calibration of spiritual priorities.

### **Jesus’ advice in defeating the sinful natures deceit.**

- Giving- Don’t let your right hand know what your left hand is doing. (3)
  - Basically, don’t keep a personal account of your charity.
  - Let it be such a lifestyle of generosity that it is merely joyful to do so.
- Praying- Pray to God! (6)
  - Praying publicly happens but keep your mind on the audience of One.
  - Find joy in praying alone. Spending intimate time with God.
- Fasting- Stay fresh not depressed. (17)
  - Keeping it as a practice for creating awareness of spiritual priorities.

- Let each withdrawal pain provoke a moment of prayer and contemplation.

**Jesus' aim for us.**

1. Keeping good things, good things.
2. Do not rob God of his glory.
3. Do not rob yourself of his approval and blessings.
4. Seek the approval of One with an audience of One!

**Discussion Guide:**

1. What "good things" in your life do you find there is an inner battle to keep it in a good place where God gets the glory?
2. What is the appeal for such things "good" to become tainted by the desire to receive approval from others verses God?
3. Discuss the advice that Jesus gave for keeping things pure in the areas of giving, praying, and fasting. How can you apply that advice to the areas of "good" that you mentioned in question 1 that can become tainted by personal glory?