

The Uncommon Kingdom: Secrecy

Jonathan Cleveland

Matthew 6:1-4 and 16-18

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Discussion and Reflection Guide

There is a temptation to do spiritual things because of how it makes us appear to others

Read and discuss Matthew 6:1-4 and 16-18(NIV)

6 “Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. ² “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you...

...¹⁶ “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ¹⁷ But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

*What does righteousness mean here?

*Why is Jesus suggesting caution in this passage?

*How is it easy to make your spiritual life about being noticed by others? What examples can you think of?

Performative and voyeuristic spirituality are deeply unhealthy for us

When we practice these types of spirituality, it robs us of real communion with God.

*How do these labels strike you? How would you describe these two versions of spirituality?

*Do you find yourself in one of these categories at times – what does that look like for you?

*Why do you think we get caught up in performance or consuming the spirituality of others?

*What have you missed out on in your relationship with God because you have tried to project something that isn't quite true?

Secrecy protects the goodness of our spiritual disciplines

Some things are best just between you and God.

*What does practicing secrecy look like? What is it not?

*Are there parts of your spirituality that are just for you and God? What are they?

*How have you been rewarded by friendship with the God who loves you?

*What is the Spirit showing you about the way you practice spirituality in your life? Is there something he's asking you to make secret?