

Matthew 6:3

But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

The “*when you*” statements made by Jesus when He taught the Sermon on the Mount. What’s a “*when you*” statement, you may be thinking? Well one of them is in today’s verse which say “*when you do a charitable deed*”. When I read these “*when you*” statements that Jesus spoke, they tell me that they are something that we are to do, and not a suggest. Notice Jesus did not say, “Well, if you feel like doing a charitable deed”, no, He said very clearly “*when you do a charitable deed*” Meaning that it is something that we are to do.

But not only did Jesus teach us in the Sermon on the mount to do a “*charitable deed*” (Helping others), but also to, “*pray*” and “*fast*”. Yet people struggle saying that they don’t really know or feel comfortable doing a charitable deed or praying or that they don’t even know how to fast.

But Jesus has an answer for all those who struggle with these things, and not only does Jesus tell us how to do them, but also, how not to do them.

So, how are we not to do a charitable deed?

† **Matthew 6:2** *Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*

Now you may not blow a trumpet when you do for others but are you telling others what you did for someone else or for the church or for a ministry, which is pretty much bragging (tooting your own horn) or wanting to be noticed for what you did, that’s the same thing as blowing a trumpet, because it’s drawing attention to yourself. One trap I see some Christians falling into is posting the things they do for others on social media, which is blowing a trumpet.

So, how are we supposed to do for others then?

† **Matthew 6:3-4** *But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.*

Simply, do it in secret and don’t brag or tell others about it, and when you do it that way, God has got you covered. “*your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.*”

Another thing that Jesus said that we are to do is “*pray*”. We know Jesus gave us the example of how to pray, but did you know Jesus also told how not to pray as well?

† **Matthew 6:5 & 7** *And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.*

Don't pray to be showy or so that others can say what a wonderful prayer you are. Some do that to be seen and praised by men, but at home, they can barely pray before their meal at dinner time, or they only pray when they want something from the Lord.

One way some will be showy in their prayer around others is before a meal in a restaurant with Christian friends. Just remember that you don't need a long-winded prayer full of empty words to impress others. Simply be thankful for the food, and if you keep it that simple, everyone else will be thankful too, because their food won't be cold by the time you say Amen.

Yet, Jesus tells us how to pray, which is to.

† **Matthew 6:6** *But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*

If your prayers are more intimate when you are alone with God, then they are when you are around others, then you are not being showy. There should be nothing better than being alone in prayer with your Father in heaven. *“and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”*

Finally, Jesus tells us, *“When you fast”* Now I know that fasting is hard for us here in the USA, because we are not used to it. They even have commercials for candy bars (Snickers) that you need to eat between lunch and dinner so that you can make it through the day, because we get Hangry (Angry because you are Hungry = Hangry). And I know they say, well you don't have to fast from food, you can fast from TV, or the internet or social media, or shopping or _____? But fasting in the bible is referred to abstaining from food, because it is denying your flesh from what it wants. So you may fast from TV for a night and use that time to read a book or even your bible, but while you are doing that, are you stuffing your mouth with potato chips or candy or anything else. Simply, you are substituting food for TV, which is not denying your flesh at all, but feeding it.

So, first Jesus tells us how not to fast.

† **Matthew 6:16** *Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.*

Simply, don't tell anyone, because when you do, you are wanting everyone to know how "spiritual" you are being, and they will give you praise for knowing that you are fasting. I think the only one exception would be your spouse, and you are letting him or her know simply so they will understand why you are not eating dinner that night.

Now Jesus tells us how to fast. (Notice once again Jesus say "**when you fast**" not "if you fast")

† **Matthew 6:17-18** *But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*

No one should be able to tell that you are fasting. You still shower and brush your teeth and comb your hair and dress as you usually would. "*so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*"

One finally thing that Jesus says about the "**when you**" statements, and that's what He says at the end of each "**when you**" statement, which are words of encouragement for all of us, and those words are "*your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.*"

So do these three things because Jesus tells us plainly in scripture that we are to do them, which are to; *do a charitable deed, pray* and *fast*, and when you do, think about who you really want to receive a reward from, man, or the Lord?

† **John 12:43** *for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*

† **Matthew 16:27** *For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works.*