FBC SUMMIT

LIFE Group Discussion Guide

October 25, 2026

Matthew 6:1-4

CONVERSATION STARTERS

What are some highs or lows you experienced this past week?

What Scripture has been shaping you recently?

Where have you seen God moving in your life this week?

What did you hear in today's sermon OR read in today's passage that you would like to discuss?

What did you learn about yourself in today's sermon/passage?

What did you learn about God in today's sermon/passage?

What convicted you as you listened to today's sermon OR read in today's passage?

OPENING

Why do people sometimes enjoy being recognized or thanked for something they have done?

Most of us appreciate encouragement and recognition. There is nothing wrong with being thankful when someone notices something we've done well. But Jesus warns us about a deeper issue: **Who are we ultimately trying to impress?**

In Matthew 6:1–4, Jesus teaches His followers to practice righteousness without making their good works a performance for other people. He challenges us to examine our motives and to pursue God's approval rather than the applause of others.

Today we'll explore how followers of Jesus serve and give from a heart that seeks God's approval rather than human recognition.

SCRIPTURE READING

Read **Matthew 6:1–4** together.

Ask the group to listen for:

- Jesus' warning about practicing righteousness.
- The difference between being seen by people and being seen by God.
- What Jesus says about giving.
- What He teaches about our motives.

PASSAGE SUMMARY

Matthew 6 begins a new section of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.
In Matthew 5, Jesus addressed the character and conduct of His followers. Now He begins addressing the motives behind their religious practices**.**

Jesus mentions giving to those in need. Giving was an important part of Jewish religious life, but some people were practicing generosity in ways that drew attention to themselves.

Jesus warns His followers not to practice righteousness simply so other people will notice them.

The issue isn't whether other people happen to see our good works. The issue is why we are doing them**.**

Jesus uses strong language when He describes people who give in order to receive recognition. His concern is that they have already received the reward they were seeking—the attention of others.

Jesus then gives a different picture: "Don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."

This is a vivid way of emphasizing discretion and humility. Jesus isn't establishing a rule that every act of generosity must be completely anonymous. Rather, He is teaching that our motivation should not be personal recognition.

God sees what others don't see.
God knows our motives.

God values faithfulness even when no one else notices.

The main point is:
Jesus calls His followers to practice generosity and righteousness for God's glory rather than for personal recognition.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Why can recognition and praise become a temptation when we do something good?
Recognition feels good and can make us feel important or appreciated. The danger comes when being noticed becomes the primary reason we serve, give, or do what is right.

What is the difference between doing something good and doing something good for the right reason?
The outward action may look exactly the same, but the motive is different. Jesus is concerned not only with what we do but also with why we do it.

Why does Jesus care so much about our motives?
God cares about the heart. A person can do the right thing outwardly while being motivated by pride, selfishness, or a desire for recognition.

What are some ways Christians might unintentionally seek recognition for their service?
Talking about everything we've done, expecting praise, becoming disappointed when nobody notices, comparing our service with others, or serving primarily because we want to be seen as faithful.

Does Jesus mean that we should never allow anyone to know about our good works?
No. Jesus' emphasis is on motive. There are times when good works should be visible and bring glory to God. The problem is doing good primarily to receive personal praise.

Why is serving when no one notices an important test of our motives?
When no one is watching or thanking us, we have less opportunity for personal recognition. Continuing to serve faithfully can reveal that our motivation is genuinely rooted in love for God and others.

How does remembering that "your Father who sees in secret" change the way we serve?
It reminds us that God sees what others don't. We don't need to depend on human recognition because God knows our faithfulness and values obedience.

APPLICATION

How do you typically respond when your service or generosity goes unnoticed? What might your response reveal about your motives?

Are there areas where you are tempted to do good primarily because you want recognition? What would it look like to redirect your motivation toward God?

What is one act of generosity or service you could do this week that may never receive public recognition? How might doing it quietly strengthen your relationship with God?

DIG DEEPER

Read Matthew 6:5–6. How does Jesus apply the same principle to prayer?

Read Matthew 6:16–18. How does He apply it to fasting?

Read Colossians 3:23–24. How does this passage reshape our understanding of work and service?

Why is it sometimes difficult to serve faithfully when no one notices?

How can social media encourage us to seek recognition for things we do?

How can a LIFE Group encourage service while keeping the focus on God's glory rather than personal recognition?

CLOSING THOUGHT

Jesus isn't simply teaching us to give more. He's teaching us to examine why we give.

He's not simply telling us to serve more. He's asking us to examine why we serve.

It's possible to do something good for the wrong reason.

We can serve because we want people to notice us.

We can give because we want people to think highly of us.

We can help someone while secretly wanting recognition.

Jesus calls us to something deeper.

He wants our good works to flow from love for God rather than a desire for applause. When nobody else sees, God sees**.**

When nobody else notices, God knows**.**

When nobody else applauds, our faithfulness still matters to Him.

Ask yourself:

- Who am I trying to please?
- Do I become disappointed when people don't recognize my service?
- Am I willing to serve when no one will know?
- Is God's approval enough for me?

This week, intentionally do something generous or sacrificial for someone without seeking recognition. Let God alone be the audience for that act of service.

Remember:
The goal of Christian service isn't to be seen by people—it is to be faithful before God.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next week we will discuss **Matthew 6:5-8** as we continue the series, *The Greatest Sermon Ever Preached: The Sermon on the Mount.*

PRAYER FOCUS

- Thank God that He sees and knows what others may never see.
- Ask Him to purify our motives in giving, serving, and doing good.
- Pray for humility when we receive recognition and faithfulness when we don't.
- Ask God to help us seek His approval above the approval of others.
- Pray that our generosity and service would point people toward God rather than ourselves.
- Pray that our LIFE Groups would cultivate a culture of humble, joyful, and faithful service.
- Pray specifically for the invitation portion of our worship services—that hearts will be open, the Spirit will move powerfully, and people will respond in obedience to Christ.

COMMENTARY

Matthew 6:1-4

Jesus warns His disciples not to practice their righteousness in front of others just to be seen. When people do good deeds to get applause, human praise becomes their only reward.

Key Themes

- True Motives: Giving to the poor should stem from genuine love for God and others, not a desire for public status.
- Hypocrisy: Jesus uses the word "hypocrites" to describe people who put on a show of piety, comparing them to those who blow trumpets to draw attention to their charity.
- Secret Giving: Telling the left hand not to know what the right hand does is a vivid way to say giving should be intensely private and free from self-congratulation.
- The Father's Reward: God sees what is done in secret and rewards His followers openly.