

**THE MAIN THING:** To live authentically requires an examination of our motives in serving God through prayer, giving and fasting. In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, His concern is that our walk with God be real, not just an act for the benefit for others who are watching but for an Audience of One.

**PURSUE RELATIONSHIP:** *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. Tell of a time when as a child you were told an interesting reason when you asked the question 'Why...?'
2. Tell of a time when you have given a child the same kind of 'reason.'

**PURSUE GOD:** *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. Pastor Henry presented three keys to keep our walk with God authentic: beware of impure motives, serve in secret and seek God's ultimate reward. In what ways do the verses in Mt 6:1-18 speak to these directives?
2. How can we be accountable to ourselves in these areas? What criteria can an individual follow to help with checking out personal motives?
3. What is our responsibility to other believers in our sphere of influence? (Mt 5:14-16; Acts 4:36,37; 5:1-10)
4. In what way is 'seeing God' the ultimate reward? How do we experience this in daily life? (Pastor Henry gave examples: in his grandchildren when they pray; when people are transformed in their lives; refusing to be bitter about circumstances but continuing to be thankful and praising God) What do we imagine the reward to be like in heaven? (Mt 5:8 and 16:26)

*Pastor Henry's questions for personal reflection:*

1. To what degree is my desire to live for God and to serve Him dependent on recognition from others?
2. To what degree am I drawn to positions in the spotlight?
3. Do I find myself more motivated to practice righteousness when someone is watching?

**PURSUE MISSION:** *Seek to be the community of God's people in your community*

What gifts, talents, abilities has God given you? How do you use these in service?  
Be encouraged to use them as you 'see God' during this next week. Affirm giftedness in others. And, *receive* affirmation as opportunities to see God at work around you.

**THE WORD (NIV)**

**Matthew 5:14-16**

"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup>Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. <sup>16</sup>In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

**Acts 4:36-37**

Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means "son of encouragement"), <sup>37</sup>sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

**Acts 5:1-10**

Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. <sup>2</sup>With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. <sup>3</sup>Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some of the money you received for the land? <sup>4</sup>Didn't it belong to you before it was sold? And after it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal? What made you think of doing such a thing? You have not lied just to human beings but to God." <sup>5</sup>When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died. And great fear seized all who heard what had happened. <sup>6</sup>Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. <sup>7</sup>About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. <sup>8</sup>Peter asked her, "Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got for the land?" "Yes," she said, "that is the price." <sup>9</sup>Peter said to her, "How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also." <sup>10</sup>At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband.

**Matthew 6:1-16**

**Sermon on the Mount: An Audience of One** Dr. Henry Schorr

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If you know a child, you may be familiar with the “Why?” stage of development in which there is an ongoing interrogation of “Why?” for every action under the sun. Answering these ‘Why?’ questions can challenge our sincerity and authenticity when we share out loud one idea while thinking about a different reason. One such example might be explaining to a child that they need to wear a seatbelt to stay safe on the drive, while we are also thinking, “And I don’t want to get a ticket should I get pulled over by a police officer.”

In Matthew 6, Jesus challenges us to ask ourselves, “Why?” in order to help us uncover our true motivation for the words and actions we choose to use on a daily basis. As we read what Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount, we must remember He is speaking these words to offer us freedom to be who God made us to be. Jesus’ concern is that our walk with God stays real, and, in Matthew 6, He gives us three keys to maintaining an authentic walk with Him.

The first key to keeping our walk with God real is to **beware of impure motives**. Jesus points out that we can be doing acts of righteousness for no other purpose than to receive admiration and recognition from other people. Jesus gives examples of this sort of motivation as seen from the actions of religious leaders at the time, who would parade three of the most important demonstrations of spiritual devotion - giving, praying and fasting. These spiritual role models would put on a very public showing that appeared incredibly devoted to God, but Jesus saw the true motivation of their hearts and referred to them as hypocrites or actors, pretending to be something on the outside that did not align with who they were inside. Jesus revealed that their devotion was truly to themselves, filling up on pride when they received the recognition from the people who noticed them. Jesus also warned that such recognition would be the only reward they would receive for those actions. We read in Scripture (Acts 4:34-37) that there are times when our demonstrations of devotion will be known by others and that is alright when we are not seeking to be noticed. We are also given examples (Acts 5:1-10) when our concern to be given public credit for acts of devotion can lead to our downfall.

The second key to keeping our walk with God real is to **serve in secret**. When we take opportunities to serve outside the limelight or give anonymously, we can purify our motives and be released from the pride that ties our actions to public approval and applause.

Finally, the third key is to keeping our walk with God real is to **seek first God’s ultimate reward**. While it is a common desire to be noticed and appreciated, the issue we face is WHO do we want to be noticed by? Jesus challenges us to seek this recognition from an audience of one - our Heavenly Father. This is important to God because He knows us better than we know ourselves and He knows that relying on the applause of people will eventually disappoint us, causing us despair and missing out on God’s ultimate reward. In Matthew 5:6, the sixth Beatitude says, “*Blessed are the pure in heart for they will see God.*” Jesus is trying to let us know that when we are pure in heart, focused completely on the pursuit of God we will be rewarded by seeing Him! When we give God our undivided loyalty and are walking with Him throughout our day, we will hear His voice and be aware of His constant presence in all things. We will be able to ‘see’ God now and experience all he has for us in this life. The ultimate reward - God gives us Himself.

*Prayerfully consider the personal reflections Pastor Henry spoke about to help make your walk with God real. This Personal Reflection Questionnaire is included in the Sermon Study Guide.*