

To Be Seen of Men...Or To Honor God?

Jesus warned about a dangerous attitude in religion, doing good works not for God, but to be seen by others. *“Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise, you have no reward from your Father in Heaven.”* Matthew 6:1. The Pharisees often fell into this trap. Though they appeared devout, their motives were misplaced. *“But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments.”* Matthew 23:5. Even their prayers were designed for attention. *“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray...that they may be seen by men.”* Matthew 6:5. Their actions looked righteous, but their purpose was wrong.

Worship is about God, not an audience. In the Old Testament, most acts of worship were personal. Individuals brought sacrifices before the Lord quietly and sincerely. *“He shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the Lord.”* Leviticus 1³. These were not performances for the nation but acts of devotion to God. The lesson is simple, true worship is focused on God, not on being seen. A question for you today. Why do you worship? Why do you serve? Why do you come together with the church? Is it to honor God or to be seen by others?

Ways this can happen today. The same problem Jesus addressed still exists. Prayer for appearance rather than sincere communication with God. Giving for recognition instead of quiet generosity. *“Do not sound a trumpet before you...that they may have glory from men.”* Matthew 6:2. Attendance for reputation, wanting others to see faithfulness. Service for praise, seeking acknowledgment instead of God’s approval. These may seem small, but they reveal the heart.

What true worship looks like. God desires sincerity. *“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”* John 4:24. *“Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.”* Colossians 3:23. True worship is not about impressing others, it is about honoring God from the heart.

A simple challenge. Before your next act of worship, ask yourself *“Am I doing this for God, or to be seen?”* Jesus teaches that what is done sincerely, even in private, is what God values most. *“When you pray...pray to your Father who is in the secret place.”* Matthew 6:6. Let your worship be genuine. Let your service be humble. Let your heart be focused on God. Because when your motive is right, your worship will be right, and God will be honored.

~Ron Josselet (Assisted by ChatGPT)