

“Christ Confronts & Contrasts Motives”

Matthew 6:1

July 27, 2025

INTRO: WHY do we do what we do?

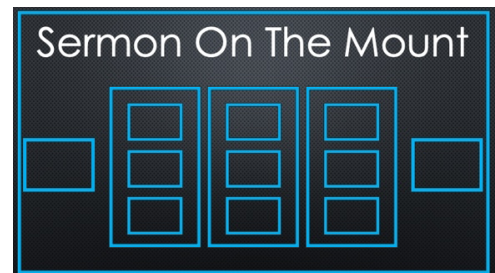
(How important, intense, & impacting is that question & its answers?)

You may never be asked & answer a more important question...

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

- Gospel of Matthew on The Gospel of Jesus Christ
- Messaging Structures...



- Missional Scriptures (3:15,17-4:1,17,19-5:6,17,20,48)
- **Transition:** vision & antithesis (ch.5) to hypocrites
 - *Blessed are... You've heard but I say...Beware!*
 - *“you have NO REWARD from your Father...”*

BIG IDEA:

Creator Christ is crystal clear here.
Unholy hypocrites are heading to hell...
but His biblically-righteous heirs have
their eternal hope & homes in heaven.

PREVIEW: **SEE CHRIST ON MISSION VIA...**

- Christ on MESSAGE
- Christ on MOTIVES
- Christ on MISERY

T/S: Matthew 5:21–48 focuses on the **teaching** of the law, on **what men believe**, and 6:1–18 focuses on the **practice** of the law, **what men do**. The first section emphasizes inner moral righteousness... This second section emphasizes outward formal righteousness—giving three representative illustrations of religious activity. - MacArthur

TEXT: Matthew 6:1

*Beware of practicing your righteousness before men,
in order to be seen by them, for then,
you will have no reward, from your Father in heaven.*

T/S:



Before we jump into the text...

*What would a world lacking
“**truth in love**” be like?*

(Look around... AND... read up on hell.)

WHAT IF TRUTH & LOVE WERE CORRUPTED & REDEFINED?
(Again... Look around!)

What if God's Word, will, & ways were corrupted, contradicted, & changed... across the continents, throughout culture, & within the professing church?

(Look around... what do you see, hear, & expect?)

It's time for God's people to BE The Church...*Christ's aroma, & armored-ambassadors!*

Christian: *what did your "Yes LORD" biblically & missionally mean?*

It's long past our turn & time... as ordinary folks who have been with Jesus (Acts 4:13), to be accused of turning this world upside down – through our living & loving, caring & compassionate contradiction-with & confrontation-of sinful corruption – starting in the church... & working our way out through the community, country, & continents.

I. Christ on MESSAGE

Beware of practicing your righteousness before men,

Christ's Word/words are crystal clear here...

Christ is declaring sound doctrine! (cf. Titus 2:1,15)

VIDEO:

"Why Is Sound Doctrine So Important?"

(GotQuestions.org)

A. **Warning!** = “Beware!”

- **CLEAR warning**

- *Beware! Watch out! Take heed!*

The imperative is proactive—error must be identified and resisted before it takes root.

THE OPPOSITE OF προσέχω IS SPIRITUAL DRIFTING—GRADUAL, OFTEN UNNOTICED, DEPARTURE FROM ANCHORING TRUTH. (HEB. 2:1)

The verb addresses the mind (understanding truth), the heart (cherishing truth), and the will (acting on truth).

The verb therefore guards both doctrine and devotion.

προσέχω CALLS EVERY BELIEVER—DISCIPLE, LEADER, CONGREGATION—TO AN ALERT, SUSTAINED, AND RESPONSIVE GAZE UPON GOD’S WORD, GOD’S PEOPLE, AND ONE’S OWN HEART. THE VERB FRAMES CHRISTIAN LIVING AS INTENTIONAL WATCHFULNESS UNTIL FAITH BECOMES SIGHT.

- **CONTEXTUALIZED warning**
 - Matthew 3:15,17 / 4:1,17,19 / 5:6,17,20,48
 - Matthew 5:16 & Matthew 28:18-20
- **CONTRASTING warning**
 - Those who are and will be:
 - Righteous vs. Unrighteous
 - Kingdom vs. Corruption citizens
 - Pleasing vs. Displeasing to Christ
 - Children of God vs. the Devil
 - Eternally vs. Earthly rewarded
- **CORRECTING warning**
 - Don't think God doesn't see...
 - Don't think God doesn't care...
 - Don't think God doesn't respond...
 - Don't think you can get over on God...
 - Don't think you can give God lip service.
 - Don't think you can balance God & self.
 - Don't think you can/can't blur the lines.
 - Don't think you can't stumble into sin...
 - Don't think you can't make this mistake.
- **CLARIFYING warning**
 - Those who are MISSIONAL...
 - Those who will be MISERABLE!
 - WHY the two will be divided eternally.
 - **Motive matters!**

Motive helps to define & divide righteousness... and righteousness will define & divide humanity & eternity!

B. Works... = *"practicing your righteousness"*

- *"practicing"* = doing vs. talking
- *"your"* = one of two applications...
- *"righteousness"* = good works

The noun "righteousness" appears ninety-two times in the Greek New Testament. It gathers the rich Old Testament background of "rightness" before God (Hebrew *šēdāqâ*) and carries it forward into the gospel era where it denotes (1) the flawless moral integrity of God, (2) the saving status granted to believers in Christ, and (3) the Spirit-wrought life that conforms to God's standards.

WHOSE RIGHTEOUSNESS?

IT'S HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT SAVES!
(2 Cor. 5:21)

As humanity's representative, He intercedes for us before God. As God's representative, He assures us of God's forgiveness.

C. Witness! = *"before men"*

- The men are NOT the issue here...
- The MOTIVE is what matters...
- *WHY are our works before men?*
- Where our motive is, like where our treasure is, there our hearts will be also! – (cf. Matthew 6:21)

II. Christ on **MOTIVES**

in order to be seen by them, for then,

Augustine

It is not the being seen of men that is wrong, but doing these things for the purpose of being seen of men. The problem with the hypocrite is his motivation. He does not want to be holy; he only wants to seem to be holy. He is more concerned with his reputation for righteousness than about actually becoming righteous.

A. Motive **DEFINED**: *“in order”*

PREPARES the real MOTIVE

B. Motive **DESCRIBED**: *“to be seen”*

PRESENTS the real MOTIVE

- This answers: **WHY?**
- This is #1 **PRIORITY**
- This is #1 **PURPOSE**
- This is #1 **PASSION**

C. Motive **DIFFERENTIATED**: *“by them”*

PERSONALIZES real MOTIVE

- **“them”** is the **target audience...**
 - **THEIR applause** is the **#1 aim.**
 - **THEIR pleasing** is the **#1 purpose.**
 - **THEIR reward** is the **#1 wanted!**

P.T. Barnum:

“The noblest art is to make people happy.”

The biblical Church... the supernaturally loving & unified, set-apart & serving-people of God, who live on mission together, are the biblical recipients of Christ's, blood-bought, personally-distributed mercy & grace. Yet, in our culture today, there's a fine line between the circus & the Church, because, frankly, many Christ-less churches are little more than Scripture-bending circuses... The irony is, when the Church is healthy, while it never needs the circus lights & atmosphere, it IS the greatest show on earth... AND it IS the place & people you ought to want to BE. – Amen.

Jesus The Christ:

The noblest art is to help people BE holy.
(“Go make disciples!”)

Psalm 106:3 = Blessed are they who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times!

NOTE: ALL but Philemon N.T. book warns of false teachers!

- **It's not just “to” them it's FOR them.**
- **It's FOR them...so as to get FROM them!**
- **Thus, it's NOT for God or His glory!**
- **Thus, it's REALLY for us & our glory...**

➤ **Q:** What's the difference between 5:16 & 6:1?

In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works (and moral excellence) and give glory to your Father in heaven.

➤ **A: MOTIVE!**

- **PERSONAL/INTERNAL PRIORITY**
- **PRIMARY PURPOSE**
- **THE WHY BEHIND THE WHAT**
- **TRUE HEART'S DESIRE**
- **MISSIONAL INTENT...**
- **GLORY SEEKING!**

III. Christ on **MISERY**

*you will have no reward,
from your Father in heaven.*

VIDEO:

"What Is The Purpose Of The Church"

(GotQuestions.org)

REMEMBER:

- Jesus is LORD! He is Creator-Christ!
- Jesus came to fulfill all righteousness...
- Jesus is declaring sound/perfect doctrine.

- His righteousness defines & divides ALL...
- Jesus is our blueprint, bullseye & #1 passion!
- Jesus is the Source of the Father's rewards.
- Jesus is the Substance of Father's rewards.
- Jesus is the Standard of Father's rewards.
 - Different **Power(s)** = **NO REWARD**
 - Different **Priorities** = **NO REWARD**
 - Different **Purposes** = **NO REWARD**
 - Different **Practices** = **NO REWARD**
 - Different **Passions** = **NO REWARD**

- ***“you”*** makes this point both personal & universal
- ***“What do you want?”*** – Jesus The Christ (John 1:38)

- ***“will have”*** time tense is both present & future.

- ***“no”*** is an ABSOLUTE term... ***none, zero, ziltch!***

- ***“reward”*** What is a/the reward?
 - Universal: ***“to give in return”*** (Websters 1828)
 - Contextual: (There are two in view here.)
 - Fleshly: **achieved thru crowd pleasing**
 - Culturally = **worldly norm(s)**
 - Compensation, Comfort, Chill
 - Acceptance, Applause, Access
 - Majorities, ministries, & more
 - Fame, fortune, & friends...
 - Variable timelines & lifespans

- Biblically = ranges... “empty – sin”
- Personally: spiritual warfare (Eph.6)
- Fatherly: divine & eternal blessings!

PIPER:

“Christians NEVER earn ANY-thing good from God... It’s ALL of GRACE! God rewards His own gifts that He has given to us.”

1 Corinthians 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace to me was not in vain. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

- Biblically
 - *God glorifying:*
 - Motives & Mission
 - Means & Message
 - Methods & Ministries
 - God gifted from start to finish
 - Gospel-centric & blood bought
- Culturally
 - Mocked, maligned, marginalized
 - Called weird & worrisome...
 - Slandered, Hated, Persecuted

- Personally
 - Both saving & sanctifying
 - Begins now but lasts eternal!
 - Blessings from start to finish!

Our good deeds are NOT meritorious... NO! Our good deeds are the fruit of God's grace & gifts in our lives!

- 1 Corinthians 4:7!!!

For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?

- 1 Corinthians 3:6-8!!!

6I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8He who plants and he who waters are one, and each will receive his wages according to his labor.

ALL good works are the works of faith... and faith is a fruit of the Spirit. Thus, God gets all the glory for any & all of our good works. Therefore, His rewards are for & from Him!

- **Whose** rewards do we want?
 - **OUR "FLESHLY IN THE WORLD"**
 - Our "Father's in heaven"
- **What** reward do you/we want?
 - **UNRIGHTEOUS** or **RIGHTEOUS?**

➤ 2 Corinthians 5:21 = ultimate blessing/reward

Matthew 10:42

And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward."

➤ *"from your Father in heaven."*

- *"from"* = originator/source of the reward
- *"your Father"* = general term for all Jews

QUOTE: H.B. Charles:

We do NOT approach the Lord like a desperate beggar going to a wealthy stranger for a big favor... nor a guilty criminal going to a strict judge for a lenient sentence... nor a slave without status going to master without mercy for a request without assurance.

NO... IF YOU ARE A CHRISTIAN, YOU ARE A CHILD OF THE KING!

- *"in heaven"* = clarifies the One true God.

REVIEW:

Creator Christ is crystal clear here.
Unholy hypocrites are heading to hell...
but His biblically righteous heirs have
their eternal hope & homes in heaven.

HYPOCRISY IS SEEN AS A GRAVE SIN BECAUSE IT INVOLVES DECEPTION AND A LACK OF AUTHENTICITY IN ONE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND OTHERS.

It undermines the witness of the believer...
and can lead others astray.

The Bible calls for a life of integrity, where one's actions align with their professed beliefs. True righteousness, according to Scripture, is not merely about external compliance with religious norms but involves a transformation of the heart and mind.

Doctrinal Synthesis

Scripture presents two complementary truths: salvation is a free gift apart from works (Romans 4:4-5), yet deeds done in grace are repaid with proportionate reward. This distinguishes entrance into the kingdom (entirely by grace) from estate within the kingdom (subject to evaluation). Far from undermining grace, the doctrine of rewards magnifies it, for God stoops to value and recompense service He Himself enables.

CLOSE:

Charles Haddon Spurgeon

How often have you and I helped to keep sinners easy in their sin, by our inconsistency! Had we been true Christians, the wicked man would often have been pricked to the heart, and his conscience would have convicted him.

God's penetrating Word doesn't
"cut us down," it cleans us UP!

What does love do when it sees a child in danger?

LOVE DOES WHAT JESUS IS DOING!

- Love takes action to bring what help is needed.
- Love does its best to stop harm from happening.
- Love risks others not liking it...

Don't miss His loving grace, mercy, & mission here.

Christ is...

compassionately-**confronting**
compassionately-**contrasting**,
compassionately-**convicting**,
compassionately-**correcting**, &
compassionately-**clarifying!**

BECAUSE...

Christ is fulfilling ALL righteousness... by, in part...

confronting & defining unrighteousness
contrasting & describing unrighteousness
convicting & exposing unrighteousness
correcting & calling-out the unrighteous
clarifying & warning the unrighteous!

This truth in love is not declared to beat anybody down...
but rather, to pick everyone up!

This good news is sound, defining, & dividing doctrine.

Colossians 3:23-24

²³Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, ²⁴since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.
It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

Creator Christ is crystal clear here.
Unholy hypocrites are heading to hell...
but His biblically-righteous heirs have
their eternal hope & homes in heaven.

Revelation 22:12

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with Me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done.

Amen & AMEN

PRAYER

STUDY NOTES:

Matthew 6:1 ►

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
4337 [e]	Προσέχετε Prosechete	Beware	V-PMA-2P
1161 [e]	δὲ de	now	Conj
3588 [e]	τὴν tēn	the	Art-AFS
1343 [e]	δικαιοσύνην dikaiosynēn	righteousness	N-AFS
4771 [e]	ὑμῶν hymōn	of you	PPro-G2P
3361 [e]	μὴ mē	not	Adv
4160 [e]	ποιεῖν poiein	to do	V-PNA
1715 [e]	ἔμπροσθεν emprosthen	before	Prep
3588 [e]	τῶν tōn	-	Art-GMP

444 [e]	ἀνθρώπων anthrōpōn	men	N-GMP
4314 [e]	πρὸς pros	in order	Prep
3588 [e]	τὸ to	-	Art-ANS
2300 [e]	θεαθῆναι theathēnai	to be seen	V-ANP
846 [e]	αὐτοῖς· autois	by them;	PPro-DM3P
1487 [e]	εἰ ei	if	Conj
1161 [e]	δὲ de	now	Conj
1490 [e]	μή' ἴγε, mēge	otherwise,	Prtcl
3408 [e]	μισθὸν misthon	reward	N-AMS
3756 [e]	οὐκ ouk	not	Adv
2192 [e]	ἔχετε echete	have you	V-PIA-2P
3844 [e]	παρὰ para	with	Prep

3588 [e]	τῷ tō	the	Art-DMS
3962 [e]	Πατρὶ Patri	Father	N-DMS
4771 [e]	ὑμῶν hymōn	of you	PPro-G2P
3588 [e]	τῷ tō	who [is]	Art-DMS
1722 [e]	ἐν en	in	Prep
3588 [e]	τοῖς tois	the	Art-DMP
3772 [e]	οὐρανοῖς. ouranois	heavens.	N-DMP

Expositor's Greek Testament

[Matthew 6:1](#) describes the general character of Pharisaic righteousness. Then follow three special examples: *alms*, [Matthew 6:2-4](#); *prayer*, [Matthew 6:5-6](#); *fasting*, [Matthew 6:16-18](#). The transition from the one theme to the other was almost inevitable, and we may be sure that what follows formed part of the instruction on the hill.

Expositor's Bible Commentary

Religious hypocrisy: its description and overthrow (Matthew 6:1–18)

The principle (6:1)

1 If the text behind NIV is correct (cf. Notes), Jesus, having told his disciples of the superior righteousness expected of them, now warns them of the danger of religious hypocrisy.

“Your righteousness,” first occurring in 5:20, recurs here, though the focus has changed from “righteousness” in a purely positive sense to “righteousness” in a formal, external sense.

Modern translations try to show the distinction by various means: NIV renders the word “acts of righteousness” (in quotation marks), RSV offers Beware of practicing your piety before men, and NEB, “Be careful not to make a show of your religion before men.” Unfortunately, they are overstepping the evidence.

“To do righteousness” is an expression found elsewhere (Ps 106:3; Isa 58:2; 1 John 2:29; 3:7, 10). In 1 John 2:29, for instance, it is rendered by NIV “to do what is right”; and that could suffice in Matthew 6:1 as well. Jesus is not so much dealing with a different kind of righteousness or with mere acts of righteousness as with the motives behind righteous living.

**TO ATTEMPT TO LIVE IN ACCORD WITH THE
RIGHTEOUSNESS SPELLED OUT IN THE
PRECEDING VERSES BUT OUT OF MOTIVES
EAGER FOR MEN’S APPLAUSE IS TO
PROSTITUTE THAT RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

For this there will be no reward (see on 5:12) from the heavenly Father.

There is no contradiction with 5:14–16, where disciples are told to let their light shine before men so that they may see their good deeds; there the motive is for men to praise the heavenly Father.

Righteous conduct under kingdom norms must be visible so that God may be glorified. Yet it must never be visible in order to win man's acclaim.

Better by far to hide any righteous deed that may lead to ostentation. To trade the goal of pleasing the Father for the trivial and idolatrous goal of pleasing man will never do.

This verse introduces the three chief acts of Jewish piety (cf. vv. 2–18)—almsgiving, prayer, fasting (C.G. Montefiore and H. Loewe, *A Rabbinic Anthology* [London: Macmillan, 1938], pp. 412–39; Moore, *Judaism*, 2:162–79).

IN EACH ACT THE LOGICAL STRUCTURE IS THE SAME: (

- (1) warning not to do the act to be praised by men,**
- (2) guarantee that those who ignore this warning will get what they want but no more,**
- (3) instruction on how to perform the act of piety secretly, and**
- (4) assurance Father who sees in secret will reward openly**

Notes

1 Two variants are of interest.

Ἐλεημοσύνην (*eleēmosynēn*, “alms”) was probably an early marginal gloss on δικαιοσύνην (*dikaiosynēn*, “righteousness”), since in the LXX “righteousness” in Hebrew was often rendered “alms.” The gloss was then inserted into the text by a copyist. If “alms” were in fact original, then v. 1 should be read with vv. 2–4, not as the introduction to vv. 2–18; and this would break the carefully wrought structure (discussed above). Moreover the external evidence strongly supports *dikaiosynēn*.

The evidence in favor of the connective δέ (*de*, “but”) is evenly divided (brackets, UBS; untranslated, NIV). An adversative *de* fits the context very well and therefore may have been inserted.

Ὁν εἰ δέ μή γε (*ei de mē ge*, “otherwise,” or “If you do” [NIV]), cf. Thrall, pp. 9–10.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible

Take heed that ye do not your alms - The word "alms" here denotes liberality to the poor and needy. In the margin, as in the best editions of the Greek it is "**righteousness**;" either referring to almsgiving as eminently a righteous act, or more **probably including all that is specified in this and the following verses - almsgiving, prayer, fasting, [Matthew 6:2-18](#)**. Our Saviour here does not positively command his disciples to aid the poor, but supposes that they would do it of course, and gives them directions how to do it.

It is the nature of religion to help those who are really needy; and a real Christian does not wait to be "commanded" to do it, but only asks for the opportunity.

See [Galatians 2:10](#); [James 1:27](#); [Luke 19:8](#).

Before men ... - OUR LORD DOES NOT REQUIRE US NEVER TO GIVE ALMS BEFORE PEOPLE, BUT ONLY FORBIDS OUR DOING IT "TO BE SEEN OF THEM," FOR THE PURPOSES OF OSTENTATION AND TO SEEK THEIR PRAISE.

To a person who is disposed to do good from a right motive, it matters little whether it be in public or in private. The only thing that renders it even desirable that our good deeds should be seen is that God may be glorified. See [Matthew 5:16](#).

Otherwise - If your only motive for doing it is to be seen by people, God will not reward you. Take heed, therefore, that you do not do it to be seen, "**otherwise**" God will not reward you.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

6:1-4 Our Lord next warned against hypocrisy and outward show in religious duties. What we do, must be done from an inward principle, that we may be approved of God, not that we may be praised of men. In these verses we are cautioned against hypocrisy in giving alms. Take heed of it. It is a subtle sin; and vain-glory creeps into what we do, before we are aware. But the duty is not the less necessary and excellent for being abused by hypocrites to serve their pride.

The doom Christ passes, at first may seem a promise, but it is their reward; not the reward God promises to those who do good, but the reward hypocrites promise themselves, and a poor reward it is; they did it to be seen of men, and they are seen of men.

WHEN WE TAKE LEAST NOTICE OF OUR GOOD DEEDS OURSELVES, GOD TAKES MOST NOTICE OF THEM.

He will reward thee; not as a master who gives his servant what he earns, & no more, but as a Father who gives abundantly to his son that serves him.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

CHAPTER 6

Sermon on the Mount—continued.

Mt 6:1-18. Further Illustration of the Righteousness of the Kingdom—Its Unostentatiousness.

General Caution against Ostentation in Religious Duties (Mt 6:1).

1. Take heed that ye do not your alms—But the true reading seems clearly to be "your righteousness." The external authority for both readings is pretty nearly equal; but internal evidence is decidedly in favor of "righteousness." The subject of the second verse being "almsgiving" that word—so like the other in Greek—might easily be substituted for it by the copyist: whereas the opposite would not be so likely. But it is still more in favor of "righteousness," that if we so read the first verse, it then becomes a general heading for this whole section of the discourse, inculcating unostentatiousness in all deeds of righteousness—Almsgiving, Prayer, and Fasting being, in that case, but selected examples of this righteousness; whereas, if we read, "Do not your alms," &c., this first verse will have no reference but to that one point.

By "righteousness," in this case, we are to understand that same righteousness of the kingdom of heaven, whose leading

features—in opposition to traditional perversions of it—it is the great object of this discourse to open up: ***that righteousness of which the Lord says, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 5:20).*** To "do" this righteousness, was an old and well-understood expression. Thus...

"Blessed is he that doeth righteousness at all times"
(Psalms 106:3).

It refers to the actings of righteousness in the life—the outgoings of the gracious nature—of which our Lord afterwards said to His disciples, "Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples" (Joh 15:8).

before men, to be seen of them—with the view or intention of being beheld of them. See the same expression in Mt 5:28. True, He had required them to let their light so shine before men that they might see their good works, and glorify their Father which is in heaven (Mt 5:16). But this is quite consistent with not making a display of our righteousness for self-glorification. In fact, the doing of the former necessarily implies our not doing the latter.

otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven—When all duty is done to God—as primarily enjoining and finally judging of it—He will take care that it be duly recognized; but when done purely for ostentation, God cannot own it, nor is His judgment of it even thought of—God accepts only what is done to Himself. So much for the general principle. Now follow three illustrations of it.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

Ch. [Matthew 6:1-4](#). Almsgiving

(2) The Kingdom of Heaven exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees in regard to (a) Almsgiving, 1–4

1. *alms*] The best MSS. have "righteousness;" the two words were nearly synonymous

with the Jews, partly because the poor had a right to share in the produce of the land; partly because almsgiving is the most natural and obvious external work of righteousness. In the same way *agapé* (love), the leading Christian virtue, has lost its original breadth of meaning and has sunk to the modern and restricted sense of “charity.”

Bengel's Gnomon

[Matthew 6:1](#). Προσέχετε, *take ye heed*) The hortatory address,[241] ΠΡΟΣΕΧΕ ΣΕΑΥΤΩ, *take heed to thyself* was familiar to the early Christians; since the Hebrew [השמר](#)[242] (which occurs so frequently in Deuteronomy), was thus rendered by the LXX.—ΤΗΝ ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΥΝΗΝ[243], ὑμῶν, *your righteousness*) This depends upon μὴ ποιεῖν, *not to do*. [244]—δικαιοσύνην, *righteousness*)

The treatment of the subsequent divisions relating to almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, exhibits such an exact analogy that from a comparison of them it becomes evident, that the warning contained in this verse does not apply solely and exclusively to the first division, but has the force of a general proposition.

The design of the whole discourse is to teach true righteousness; (see ch. [Matthew 5:6](#); [Matthew 5:10](#); [Matthew 5:20](#), and [Matthew 6:33](#));

and this reading accords with that design. Others read ἐλεημοσύνην,[245] *almsgiving*. [246] *Righteousness* is the whole (cf. Gnomon on ch. [Matthew 5:6](#)), three divisions of which follow immediately; viz., *almsgiving*, as being our especial duty towards our *neighbour—prayer*, as occupying the same position with regard to *God—fasting*, as holding the same place with reference to *ourselves*. These three relations, to God, to ourselves, and to our neighbour, are frequently enumerated in Holy Writ; see [Romans 2:21](#) – [Romans 7:12](#) – [Romans 14:17](#); [1 Corinthians 6:11](#) to [1 Corinthians 13:5](#); [1 Corinthians 13:6](#); [1 Corinthians 13:13](#); [Ephesians 5:9](#); [1 Timothy](#)

[1:13](#); [Titus 1:8](#) to [Titus 2:12](#); [Hebrews 12:12-13](#).—θεαθῆναι, *to be seen as a spectacle*) Theatre and hypocrite[247] (spoken of in the next verse) are words of cognate meaning.

Vincent's Word Studies

Of your Father (παρὰ)

The A. V. IMPLIES THE SOURCE OF THE REWARD; BUT THE PREPOSITION MEANS WITH, BY THE SIDE OF; SO THAT THE TRUE SENSE IS, RESERVED FOR YOU AND AWAITING YOU BY THE SIDE OF YOUR FATHER. Rev., rightly, with.

Tyndale's N.T. Commentary:

Teaching on religious observance (6:1–18)

THE 'RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH EXCEEDS THAT OF THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES' (5:20) IS TO BE SEEN NOT ONLY IN A NEW RADICAL APPROACH TO THE LEGAL AND ETHICAL QUESTIONS WHICH CONCERNED THE SCRIBES (5:21–48), BUT IN A NEW ATTITUDE TO THE SCRUPULOUS RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE WHICH WAS THE HALLMARK OF THE PHARISEES (6:1–18).

The new attitude consists not in a repudiation of the main aspects of Jewish piety, but in an avoidance of ostentation in their performance. **Religious observance is to be directed towards God, not to gaining the approval of men.**

Almsgiving, prayer and fasting are selected as examples of religious observance. These three were (and are) the most prominent practical requirements for personal piety in mainstream Judaism (see Davies, pp. 307–315). The same three activities, together with the specifically Islamic requirements of the Hajj and recitation of the creed, constitute also the Five Pillars of Islam. Jesus accepts them as central also to the religious life of his disciples. **They are treated in three passages of closely parallel structure (vv. 2–4, 5–6, 16–18), with a general introduction (v. 1);** a long digression on prayer (vv. 7–15) interrupts the carefully balanced structure, and is perhaps an insertion by Matthew, made up of independent sayings of Jesus, into a characteristically memorable unit of Jesus' teaching.

1. The overall theme of the section is stated simply, in words which superficially seem to conflict with 5:16. But what is condemned here is ostentation, particularly in the practice of religious duties. (*Piety* is a good translation for *dikaiosynē* (normally 'righteousness') in this context: it picks up the 'righteousness' of 5:20, but with special application to religious observance rather than to ethical obedience, and so acts as a general term to cover the specific references to almsgiving, prayer and fasting which follow.)

The disciple's life is inevitably, and rightly, public, but that does not entitle him to show off his religious devotion; there is a world of difference between living a conspicuously good and godly life (5:13–16) and striving to gain a reputation for piety.

**THE DIFFERENCE LIES NOT ONLY IN THE
MOTIVE, BUT IN THE RESULT: THE FORMER
BRINGS GLORY TO GOD, THE LATTER ONLY TO
THE PERFORMER.**

There is also a difference in *reward*. See on 5:12 for the concept of rewards, which recurs twice in each of the three subsections that follows (vv. 2, 4, 5, 6, 16, 18).

The show-off gets what he has earned, the approval of men, and so misses the true *reward* which comes only from *your Father who is in heaven* (see on 5:16; this view of God dominates ch. 6 particularly).

MacArthur Commentary:

Giving Without Hypocrisy

(6:1–4)

Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

When therefore you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will repay you. (6:1–4)

Matthew 5:21–48 focuses on the teaching of the law, on what men believe, and 6:1–18 focuses on the practice of the law, what men do. The first section emphasizes inner moral righteousness—giving six representative illustrations regarding murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, revenge, and love. This second section emphasizes outward formal righteousness—giving three representative illustrations of religious activity. The first has to do with giving, our religion as it acts toward others (vv. 2–4); the second with praying, our religion as it acts

toward God (vv. 5–15); and the third with fasting, our religion as it acts in relation to ourselves (vv. 16–18).

THE DANGER OF FALSE RIGHTEOUSNESS

Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. (6:1)

THIS VERSE INTRODUCES THE SECTION ON THE FORMS OF RELIGIOUS RIGHTEOUSNESS AND APPLIES TO EACH OF THE THREE ILLUSTRATIONS IN 6:2–18.

The story is told of an eastern ascetic holy man who covered himself with ashes as a sign of humility and regularly sat on a prominent street corner of his city. When tourists asked permission to take his picture, the mystic would rearrange his ashes to give the best image of destitution and humility.

A great deal of religion amounts to nothing more than rearranging religious “ashes” to impress the world with one’s supposed humility and devotion. The problem, of course, is that the humility is a sham, and the devotion is to self, not to God. Such religion is nothing more than a game of pretense, a game at which the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day were masters.

Because their religion was mostly an act, and a mockery of God’s true revealed way for His people, Jesus’ most blistering denunciations were reserved for them.

But they were not the original or the last hypocrites. Since the fall of man there have been hypocrites.

Hypocrites are mentioned in Scripture from Genesis through Revelation.

CAIN WAS THE FIRST HYPOCRITE, FEIGNING WORSHIP BY OFFERING A KIND OF SACRIFICE THAT GOD DID NOT WANT. WHEN HIS HYPOCRISY WAS UNMASKED, HE KILLED HIS BROTHER ABEL OUT OF RESENTMENT (GEN. 4:5–8). ABSALOM HYPOCRITICALLY

VOWED ALLEGIANCE TO HIS FATHER, KING DAVID, WHILE PLOTTING THE OVERTHROW OF HIS REGIME (2 SAM. 15:7–10).

THE SUPREME HYPOCRITE WAS JUDAS ISCARIOT,
who betrayed the Lord with a kiss.

Ananias and Sapphira hypocritically claimed to have given the church all the proceeds from the sale of some property, and lost their lives for lying to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1–10).

Hypocrites are found in paganism, in Judaism, and in Christianity. There were hypocrites in the early church, the medieval church, and the Reformation church. There are still hypocrites in the church today, and Paul assures us there will be hypocrites at the end of the age. “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron” (1 Tim. 4:1–2).

Hypocrisy is endemic to fallen man, an integral part of his fleshly nature. Persecution of the church helps to diminish the number of hypocrites, but even that cannot completely eliminate them.

HYPOCRISY IS NEVER TREATED LIGHTLY IN SCRIPTURE.

Through Amos, God said, “I hate, I reject your festivals, nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; and I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:21–24). All of those religious acts had been prescribed by God; but because they were performed insincerely and were not accompanied by righteous living they were not acceptable to God. The sacrifices, offerings, and songs were not given to God’s glory but to the people’s own glory and self-satisfaction.

OUTSIDE OF IDOLATRY, THE GREATEST SIN BOTH IN JUDAH AND ISRAEL WAS HYPOCRITICAL RELIGION. THE JEWS WERE

CONQUERED AND TAKEN INTO CAPTIVITY IN LARGE MEASURE BECAUSE THEY TURNED TRUE WORSHIP OF GOD INTO PHONEY MOCKERY.

In regard to that truth Isaiah says, “ ‘What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?’ says the Lord. ‘I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed cattle. And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs, or goats’ ” ([Isa. 1:11](#)). The Lord continued by declaring His displeasure also with worthless offerings, incense, new moon and sabbath festivals, and hypocritical prayers (vv. 13–15). God wanted purity and righteousness, not perfunctory rituals. “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean,” He said; “remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless; defend the orphan, plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together.... Though your sins are as scarlet, they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool” (vv. 16–18).

[Similar calls to replace superficial ceremony with genuine righteousness are found in the other literary prophets \(Jer. 11:19–20; Amos 4:4–5; Mic. 6:6–8; etc.\), as well as in the book of Job \(8:13; 15:34; 36:13\).](#)

An Aesop’s fable tells of a wolf who wanted to have a sheep for his dinner and decided to disguise himself as a sheep and follow the flock into the fold. While the wolf waited until the sheep went to sleep, the shepherd decided he would have mutton for his own meal. In the dark he picked out what he thought was the largest, fattest sheep; but after he had killed the animal he discovered it was a wolf. What that shepherd did inadvertently to a wolf in sheep’s clothing, God does intentionally. **THE LORD JUDGES HYPOCRISY.**

[Speaking to the scribes and Pharisees on one occasion, Jesus said, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men’ ”](#) ([Mark 7:6–7](#)).

[Jesus used many figures to describe hypocrisy. He compared it to leaven \(Luke 12:1\), to whitewashed tombs \(Matt. 23:27\), concealed tombs \(Luke 11:44\), tares amidst](#)

the wheat (Matt. 13:25), and to wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15).

In New Testament times some people made their living as professional mourners who were paid to weep, wail, and tear their garments at funerals and on other occasions of sadness (cf. Matt. 9:23). It is said that some mourners were careful to tear their clothing at a seam, so that the material could easily be sown back together for the next mourning.

Both the professional mourners and those who hired them were hypocrites, hiring and being hired to put on a display of mourning that was entirely pretense.

Prosechō (**beware**) means to hold, or take hold of, something and pay attention to it, especially in the sense of being on guard.

THE SCRIBES, PHARISEES, AND OTHER HYPOCRITES ARE WARNED BY JESUS TO BEWARE OF THE RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES IN WHICH THEY HAD SUCH PRIDE AND CONFIDENCE. HE WAS ABOUT TO SHOW THEM AGAIN HOW WORTHLESS, MEANINGLESS, AND UNACCEPTABLE TO GOD THOSE ACTIVITIES WERE.

Theaomai (**to be noticed**) is related to the term from which we get **theater**.

It has in mind a spectacle to be gazed at.

In other words, Jesus is warning about practicing a form of righteousness (*dikaiosunē*, acts of religious devotion in general) whose purpose is to show off before men.

Such religion is like a play; it is not real life but acting. It does not demonstrate what is in the minds and hearts of the actors, but is simply a performance designed to make a certain impression on those who are watching.

Such practices amount to theatrical righteousness, performed to impress rather than serve and to magnify the actors rather than God.

The purpose is to please **men**, not God, and the activities are not real life but an exhibition.

Such false righteousness, Jesus assures us, will never qualify a person for God's kingdom (Matt. 5:20).

False righteousness such as that does have a reward—the recognition and applause of other hypocrites and of ignorant people.

That, however, is the limit of the honor, because Jesus tells those who practice such hypocritical righteousness, ***you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.***

**GOD DOES NOT REWARD MEN-PLEASERS (CF. MATT. 5:16),
BECAUSE THEY ROB HIM OF GLORY.**

It should be noted that **your Father** is used in the same sense as in 5:16, as a reference to the Old Testament sense in which God was Israel's Father (Isa. 63:16), **not in the New Testament sense of personal relationship by salvation** (see Matt. 6:9).

The reference to God's dwelling in **heaven** distinguishes the eternal character of divine reward from the transient, shallow praise that hypocrites receive from other men.

AS IN EVERY AREA OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, THE KEY IS THE HEART, THE INNER ATTITUDE THAT MOTIVATES WHAT WE SAY AND DO. PUBLIC RIGHTEOUSNESS IS NOT TO BE REJECTED, BUT IT IS TO BE DONE IN THE SPIRIT OF HUMILITY, LOVE, AND SINCERITY. "For we are [God's] workmanship," Paul reminds us, "created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10).

Also as in every area of righteousness, **Jesus Himself is our supreme and perfect example**. He preached His messages in public, He performed His miracles of healing, compassion, and power over nature in public. Yet He continually focused attention on His heavenly Father, whose will alone He came to do (John 5:30; cf. 4:34; 6:38). Even though He was one with the Father, while He lived on earth as a man Jesus did not seek His own glory but that of His Father (John 8:49–50).

GOD WILL NOT MISS GIVING A SINGLE REWARD. **"There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do"** (Heb. 4:13). The Lord knows our hearts, our attitudes, and our motives, and every reward that is due us will be given.

It is God's perfect plan and will to give rewards to those who faithfully trust and obey Him.

And it is not unspiritual to expect and anticipate those rewards, if we do so in a spirit of humility and gratitude—knowing that God's rewards manifest His grace to the undeserving.

WE CAN MEET HIS MERCIFUL REQUIREMENTS FOR REWARDS, BUT WE CAN NEVER TRULY EARN THEM.

The greatest reward a believer can have is the knowledge that he has pleased his Lord. Our motive for looking forward to His rewards should be the anticipation of casting them as an offering at His feet, even as the twenty-four elders one day “will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, ‘Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power’ ” (Rev. 4:10–11).

4337. prosechó ►

Lexical Summary

prosechó: To pay attention, to give heed, to be cautious, to devote oneself

Original Word: προσέχω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: prosechó

Pronunciation: pros-ekh'-o

Phonetic Spelling: (pros-ekh'-o)

KJV: (give) attend(-ance, -ance at, -ance to, unto), beware, be given to, give (take) heed (to unto); have regard

NASB: beware, guard, giving attention, pay attention, paying attention, addicted, give attention

Word Origin: [from [G4314](#) (πρός - against) and [G2192](#) (ἔχω - have)]

1. **to hold the mind towards**, i.e. **pay attention** to, **be cautious** about,

apply oneself to, adhere to
{figuratively; G3563 implied}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

to attend to, **give heed to**

From **pros** and **echo**; (figuratively) **to hold the mind**

([nous](#) implied) towards, i.e. Pay attention to, be cautious about, apply oneself to, adhere to -- (give) attend(-ance, -ance at, -ance to, unto), beware, be given to, give (take) heed (to unto); have regard.

see GREEK [pros](#)

see GREEK [echo](#)

HELPS Word-studies

4337 *proséxō* (from [4314](#) /*prós*, "towards" and [2192](#) /*éxō*, "have") – properly, have towards, i.e. **to give full attention**; to set a course and keep to it.

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [pros](#) and [echó](#)

Definition

to hold to, turn to, attend to

NASB Translation

addicted (1), beware (8), give attention (1), giving...attention (1), giving attention (2), guard (3), officiated (1), pay attention (2), pay...attention (1), paying attention (2), respond (1), take care (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 4337: προσέχω

προσέχω; imperfect **προσεῖχον**; perfect **προσέσχηκα**; (present middle 3 person singular **προσέχεται** ([1 Timothy 6:3](#) Tdf.)); **to turn to** (cf. **πρός**, IV. 1), that is,

1. to bring to, bring near; thus very frequent in Greek writings from Herodotus down with **ναῦν** (quite as often omitting the **ναῦν**) and a dative of place, or followed by **πρός** with an accusative of place, **to bring a ship to land**, and simply **to touch at, put in**.

2.

a. τὸν νοῦν, to turn the mind to, attend to, be attentive: τίνι, to a person or thing, Aristophanes eqq. 503; Plato, Demosthenes, Polybius, Josephus, Lucian, Plutarch, others; once so in the Bible, viz. [Job 7:17](#). The simple προσέχειν τίνι (the Sept. for כִּי־יִקְרֶה, also for יִיִּשְׁרָאֵל), with τὸν νοῦν omitted, is often used in the same sense from Xenophon down; so in the N. T. (cf. Winer's Grammar, 593 (552); Buttmann, 144 (126)): [Acts 8:6](#); [Acts 16:14](#); [Hebrews 2:1](#); [2 Peter 1:19](#) (1 Macc. 7:11; 4 Macc. 1:1; Wis. 8:12); in the sense of **caring for, providing for**, [Acts 20:28](#).

b. προσέχω ἑμαυτῷ, to attend to oneself, i. e. to give heed to oneself (the Sept. for נִשְׁמָרָה, to guard oneself, i. e. to beware, [Genesis 24:6](#); [Exodus 10:28](#); [Deuteronomy 4:9](#); [Deuteronomy 6:12](#), etc.): [Luke 17:3](#); [Acts 5:35](#) (cf. Buttmann, 337 (290); Winer's Grammar, 567 (518); yet see ἐπί, B. 2 f. α.); with the addition of ἀπό τίνος, to be on one's guard against, beware of, a thing (cf. Buttmann, § 147, 3 (ἀπό, I. 3 b.)): [Luke 12:1](#) (Tobit 4:12; (Test xii. Patr., test. Dan 6)); also without the dative προσέχειν ἀπό τίνος: [Matthew 7:15](#); [Matthew 10:17](#); [Matthew 16:6, 11](#); [Luke 20:46](#), (Sir. 6:13 Sir. 11:33 Sir. 17:14 Sir. 18:27; ('Teaching' etc. 6, 3 [ET]; 12, 5 [ET])); followed by μή with an infinitive, to take heed lest one do a thing, [Matthew 6:1](#); ἑμαυτῷ, μήποτε with the subjunctive [Luke 21:34](#); absolutely to give attention, take heed: Sir. 13:13; the Epistle of Barnabas 4, 9 [ET]; 7, 4 [ET], 6. (9); followed by πῶς, the Epistle of Barnabas 7, 7 [ET]; by the interrogative τί, ibid. 15, 4 [ET]; ἵνα, ibid. 16, 8 [ET]; ἵνα μήποτε, the Epistle of Barnabas 4, 13 [ET] (variant; ἵνα μή, [2 Chronicles 25:16](#)); (μήποτε, the Epistle of Barnabas 4, 14).

3. namely, ἑμαυτόν, to apply oneself to, attach oneself to, hold or cleave to a person or a thing (R. V. mostly give heed): with the dative of a person to one, [Acts 8:10](#); [1 Timothy 4:1](#); τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ προσεχ. καὶ τῷ πρεσβυτερίῳ καὶ διακόνῳ, Ignatius ad Philad. 7, 1 [ET]; ad Polycarp, 6, 1 [ET]; with the dative of a thing, μύθοις, [1 Timothy 1:4](#); [Titus 1:14](#); (middle ὑγιαίνουνσι λόγοις, [1 Timothy 6:3](#) Tdf. (others προσέρχεται, which see b. β.)); to be given or addicted to: οἶνω, [1 Timothy 3:8](#) (τρυφή, Julian Caesar 22 (p. 326, Spanh. edition); τρυφή καὶ μέθη, Polyaen. strateg. 8, 56); to devote thought and effort to: τῇ ἀναγνώσει κτλ., [1 Timothy 4:13](#); τῷ θυσιαστηρίῳ (A. V. give attendance), [Hebrews 7:13](#) (ναυτικοίς, Thucydides 1, 15; for other examples from Greek writings see Passow, under the word, 3 c.; (Liddell and Scott, under the word, 4 b.)).

Topical Lexicon

Root sense and scope

προσέχω centers on deliberate, continuing attentiveness.

WHETHER TRANSLATED “PAY ATTENTION,” “BEWARE,” OR “TAKE HEED,” IT ALWAYS DEMANDS AN ACTIVE, FOCUSED RESPONSE RATHER THAN CASUAL NOTICE.

The verb addresses the mind (understanding truth), the heart (cherishing truth), and the will (acting on truth).

Call to vigilance against doctrinal error

Jesus employs προσέχω repeatedly in His warnings about leaven—symbolic of corrupt teaching.

- [Matthew 16:6](#): “Watch out; beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

- [Matthew 7:15](#); [Luke 12:1](#); [Matthew 16:11–12](#) echo the same burden.

Sound doctrine is preserved not merely by possessing truth but by constant watchfulness lest falsehood seep in.

The Master’s command shapes apostolic practice: Paul counsels Timothy, “Pay attention to myths and endless genealogies” ([1 Timothy 1:4](#)) and urges Titus to avoid “Jewish myths and the commands of men who reject the truth” ([Titus 1:14](#)).

The imperative is proactive—error must be identified and resisted before it takes root.

Protecting personal integrity and motives

Jesus widens the verb’s range to self-examination. [Matthew 6:1](#): *“Be careful not to perform your righteous acts before men to be seen by them.”*

HERE προσέχω EXPOSES HYPOCRISY THAT SEEKS HUMAN APPROVAL RATHER THAN THE FATHER'S REWARD.

[Luke 17:3](#) admonishes disciples to watch themselves lest bitterness flourish;

[Luke 21:34](#) warns against dissipation, drunkenness, and the cares of life that dull spiritual perception.

*The verb therefore guards
both doctrine and devotion.*

Shepherding oversight of God's flock

Paul charges the Ephesian elders: ***“Keep watch over*** yourselves and the entire flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers” ([Acts 20:28](#)).

Pastoral care demands the same vigilance Jesus required of His disciples.

Leaders must first watch themselves, then the sheep entrusted to them. Paul applies the principle to deacons, who must be “holding to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience” ([1 Timothy 3:8](#)).

Right oversight springs from personal attentiveness to truth.

Devoted listening that births faith

[In Philippi](#) “the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message” and ***Lydia “paid heed to what Paul said”*** ([Acts 16:14](#)).

In Samaria the *crowds “paid close attention to what was being said by Philip”* ([Acts 8:6, 10, 11](#)).

Such receptive attentiveness is the fertile soil in which the gospel germinates.

Hebrews 2:1

“We must pay closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.”

THE OPPOSITE OF προσέχω IS SPIRITUAL DRIFTING—GRADUAL, OFTEN UNNOTICED, DEPARTURE FROM ANCHORING TRUTH.

Scripture as prophetic lamp

Peter declares, *“We have the prophetic word confirmed, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a lamp shining in a dark place”* ([2 Peter 1:19](#)).

The verb frames Scripture as a light requiring continuous, concentrated regard until the dawning of Christ's return.

THE EARLY CHURCH'S HIGH VIEW OF THE WRITTEN WORD FLOWS NATURALLY FROM THIS CHARGE; CANONICAL WRITINGS WERE PRESERVED, COPIED, AND TAUGHT BECAUSE THE SAINTS WERE COMMANDED TO προσέχω TO THEM.

Historical and liturgical outworking

Early Christian gatherings featured public reading of Scripture ([1 Timothy 4:13](#)) to which believers applied προσέχω.

Justin Martyr's second-century **description of worship**—reading, exhortation, and prayer—mirrors the apostolic pattern.

The verb undergirds the historic lectionary tradition, mid-week catechesis, and expository preaching: all are corporate mechanisms designed to help the church “pay attention.”

Spiritual warfare and eschatological urgency

Because the world system seeks to dull watchfulness, προσέχω stands as a bulwark against last-days deception and despair. [Luke 21:34](#) ties vigilance to readiness for the Son of Man's appearing. [Hebrews 7:13](#) (a rare perfect tense, προσέσχηκεν) notes that priests “devoted themselves to the altar” under the Law—yet that undivided attention finds ultimate fulfillment in Christ, our eternal High Priest. New-covenant believers are likewise summoned to undivided attention to Him.

Pastoral application

1. Cultivate habit. Regular intake of Scripture, prayerful reflection, and accountability foster the attentiveness [Hebrews 2:1](#) demands.

2. Guard doctrine. Churches must evaluate teaching, literature, media, and worship lyrics against the apostolic gospel.

3. Examine motives. Service performed for applause forfeits heavenly reward ([Matthew 6:1](#)).

4. Watch for drift. Small compromises accumulate; προσέχω is preventive maintenance for the soul.

5. Shepherd well. Elders imitate the Chief Shepherd by guarding both flock and self ([Acts 20:28](#)).

Summary

προσέχω CALLS EVERY BELIEVER—DISCIPLE, LEADER, CONGREGATION—TO AN ALERT, SUSTAINED, AND RESPONSIVE GAZE UPON GOD’S WORD, GOD’S PEOPLE, AND ONE’S OWN HEART. THE VERB FRAMES CHRISTIAN LIVING AS INTENTIONAL WATCHFULNESS UNTIL FAITH BECOMES SIGHT.

1343. dikaiosuné ►

Lexical Summary

dikaosuné: Righteousness, justice

Original Word: δικαιοσύνη

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: dikaiosuné

Pronunciation: dee-kah-yos-oo'-nay

Phonetic Spelling: (dik-ah-yos-oo'-nay)

KJV: righteousness

NASB: righteousness, right

Word Origin: [from [G1342 \(δίκαιος - righteous\)](#)]

1. equity (of character or act)
2. (specially) Christian justification

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

righteousness.

From [dikaios](#); equity (of character or act); specially (Christian) justification -- righteousness.

see GREEK [dikaios](#)

HELPS Word-studies

1343 *dikaíosynē* (from [1349](#) /*dikē*, "a judicial verdict") – properly, *judicial approval* (the *verdict of approval*); in the NT, *the approval of God* ("divine approval").

[1343](#) /*dikaíosynē* ("divine approval") is the regular NT term used for *righteousness* ("God's judicial approval"). [1343](#) /*dikaíosynē* ("the approval of God") refers to *what is deemed right by the Lord* (after His examination), i.e. what is *approved in His eyes*.

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [dikaios](#)

Definition

righteousness, justice

NASB Translation

right (1), righteousness (90).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 1343: δικαιοσύνη

δικαιοσύνη, **δικαιοσύνης**, **ἡ** (**δίκαιος**); most frequently in the Sept. for דִּקְיָה and דִּקְיָה, rarely for דִּקְיָה; "the virtue or quality or state of one who is **δίκαιος**;"

1. in the broad sense, **the state of him who is such as he ought to be, righteousness** (German *Rechtbeschaffenheit*); **the condition acceptable to God** (German *Gottwohlgefälligkeit*);

a. universally: **λόγος τῆς δικαιοσύνης** (like **λόγος τῆς καταλλαγῆς**, **λόγος τοῦ σ ταυροῦ**), the doctrine concerning the way in which man may attain to a state approved of God, [Hebrews 5:13](#); **βασιλεὺς δικαιοσύνης**, the king who himself has the approbation of God, and who renders his subjects acceptable to God, [Hebrews 7:2](#); cf. Bleek at the passage b. "integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling, and acting: [Matthew 3:15](#); [Matthew 5:6, 10, 20](#); [Matthew 6:1](#) G L T Tr, WH; [Acts 13:10](#); [Acts 24:25](#); [Romans 6:13, 16, 18-20](#) (opposed to **ἁμαρτία**, **ἀνομία**, and **ἀκαθαρσία**); [Romans 8:10](#) (opposed to **ἁμαρτία**); [Romans 14:17](#) (? (see c.)); [2 Corinthians 6:7, 14](#) (opposed to **ἀνομία**, as in Xenophon, mem. 1, 2, 24); [2 Corinthians 11:15](#); [Ephesians 5:9](#); [Ephesians 6:14](#); [Philippians 1:11](#); [1 Timothy 6:11](#); [2 Timothy 2:22](#); [2 Timothy 3:16](#); [2 Timothy 4:8](#); [Titus 3:5](#); [Hebrews 1:9](#); [Hebrews 12:11](#); [James 3:18](#); [1 Peter 3:14](#); [2 Peter 2:5, 21](#); [2 Peter 3:13](#), and very often in the O. T.; **ἐν ὁδῷ δικαιοσύνης**, walking in the way of righteousness equivalent to an upright, righteous, man, [Matthew 21:32](#); **τοῦ Θεοῦ**, the righteousness which God demands, [Matthew 6:33](#); [James 1:20](#); of righteousness which manifests itself in "beneficence: [2 Corinthians 9:9f](#) (cf. Tobit 14:11; Gesenius, Thesaurus iii., p. 1151; so Chaldean דִּקְיָה, [Daniel 4:24](#), and in the Talmud and rabbinical writings (Buxtorf. col. 1891 (p. 941, Fischer edition); cf. Winer's Grammar, 32)); where **δίκαιος** **καὶ** **ὁσιότης** are connected — [Luke 1:75](#); [Ephesians 4:24](#), (Wis. 9:3; Clement of Rome, 1 Cor. 48, 4 [ET] and occasionally in secular writings) — the

former denotes right conduct toward men, the latter piety toward God (cf. Plato, Gorgias, p. 507 b.; Grimm on Sap., p. 181f; (cf. Trench, § 88, p. 328f; for additional examples see Wetstein (1752) on Ephesians, the passage cited;

cf. ὁσιος); εὐσέβεια καὶ δικαιοσύνη, Diodorus 1, 2); ποιεῖν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, to do righteousness, to live uprightly: [1 John 2:29](#); [1 John 3:7](#); [1 John 3:10](#) (not Lachmann); and in [Revelation 22:11](#) according to the text now accepted; in like manner ἐργάζεσθαι δικαιοσύνην, [Acts 10:35](#); [Hebrews 11:33](#); ζῆν τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ, to live, devote the life, to righteousness, [1 Peter 2:24](#); πληροῦν πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην, to perform completely whatever is right, [Matthew 3:15](#). When affirmed of Christ, δικαιοσύνη denotes his perfect moral purity, integrity, sinlessness: [John 16:8, 10](#); when used of God, his holiness: [Romans 3:5, 25f](#).

c. in the writings of Paul ἡ δικαιοσύνη has a peculiar meaning, opposed to the views of the Jews and Judaizing Christians. To understand this meaning, the following facts especially must be kept in view: the Jews as a people, and very many who had become converts from among them to Christianity, supposed that they secured the favor of God by works conformed to the requirements of the Mosaic law, as though by way of merit; and that they would thus attain to eternal salvation. But this law demands perfect obedience to all its precepts, and threatens condemnation to those who do not render such obedience ([Galatians 3:10, 12](#)). Obedience of this kind no one has rendered ([Romans 3:10](#)), neither Jews nor Gentiles ([Romans 1:24-2:1](#)) — for with the latter the natural law of right written on their souls takes the place of the Mosaic law ([Romans 2:14f](#)). On this account Paul proclaims the love of God, in that by giving up Christ, his Son, to die as an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of men he has attested his grace and good-will to mankind, so that they can hope for salvation as if they had not sinned. But the way to obtain this hope, he teaches, is only through faith (see πίστις (especially 1 b. and d.)), by which a man appropriates that grace of God revealed and pledged in Christ; and this faith is reckoned by God to the man as δικαιοσύνη; that is to say, δικαιοσύνη denotes "the state acceptable to God which becomes a sinner's possession through that faith by which he embraces the grace of God offered him in the expiatory death of Jesus Christ (see δικαιόω, 3 b.). In this

sense ἡ δικαιοσύνη is used without an adjunct in [Romans 4:5f, 11](#); [Romans 5:17, 21](#); [Romans 9:30](#); [Romans 14:11](#) (? (see b.)); [1 Corinthians 1:30](#); [Galatians](#)

[5:5](#); δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ, ἡ τοῦ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη, the righteousness which God ascribes, what God declares to be righteousness (Winer's Grammar, 186 (175)), [Romans 1:17](#); [Romans 3:21](#); [Romans 10:3](#); by a pregnant use, equivalent to that divine arrangement by which God leads men to a state acceptable to him, [Romans 10:4](#); as abstract for concrete, equivalent to those whom God accounts righteous, [2 Corinthians](#)

[5:21](#); δικαιοσύνη Θεοῦ διὰ πίστεως, [Romans 3:22](#); ἡ δικαιοσύνη τῆς πίστεως, which is acquired by faith, or seen in faith, [Romans 4:11, 13](#); ἡ ἐκ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη which comes from God, i. e. is adjudged, imputed, [Philippians 3:9](#) (where the

addition ἐπὶ τῇ πίστει depends on ἔχων, having ... founded upon faith (cf. Winer's Grammar, 137 (130); 392 (367); yet cf. Ellicott, at the

passage)); ἡ ἐκ πίστεως δικαιοσύνη which comes from faith, [Romans 9:30](#); [Romans](#)

10:6; ἡ διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ, [Philippians 3:9](#); ἡ κατὰ πίστιν δικαιοσύνη according to, appropriate to, faith, [Hebrews 11:7](#) (but it should be kept in mind that the conception of 'faith' in the Epistle to the Hebrews is broader than in Paul's writings (cf. e. g. Kurtz, at the passage)); Christ is called δικαιοσύνη, as being the one without whom there is no righteousness, as the author of righteousness, [1 Corinthians 1:30](#); εἰς δικαιοσύνην, unto righteousness as the result, to obtain righteousness, [Romans 10:4](#).

10; ἡ πίστις λογίζεται τίνι εἰς δικαιοσύνην, faith is reckoned to one for righteousness, i. e. is so taken into account, that righteousness is ascribed to it or recognized in it: [Romans 4:3](#), [6](#), [9](#), [22](#); [Galatians 3:6](#); [James 2:23](#); ἡ διακονία τῆς δικαιοσύνης (see διακονία, 2 b.), [2 Corinthians 3:9](#). Opposed to this δικαιοσύνη, arising from faith,

is ἡ ἐκ νόμου δικαιοσύνη, a state acceptable to God which is supposed to result from obedience to the law, [Romans 10:5f](#); ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἐν νόμῳ relying on the law, i. e. on imaginary obedience to it, [Philippians 3:6](#); ἡ ἰδία δικαιοσύνη and ἡ ἐμὴ ἐδικαιοσύνη, such as one supposes that he has acquired for himself by his own works, [Romans 10:3](#) [Philippians 3:9](#), cf. [Galatians 2:21](#); [Galatians 3:21](#).

2. in a closer sense, **justice, or the virtue which gives each one his due**; it is said to belong to God and Christ, as bestowing ἰσότημον πίστιν upon all Christians impartially, [2 Peter 1:1](#); of judicial justice, [Romans 9:28](#) R G Tr marginal reading in brackets; κρίνειν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, [Acts 17:31](#); [Revelation 19:11](#). (See references under the word δικαίω at the end.)

Topical Lexicon

Overview

The noun δικαιοσύνη appears ninety-two times in the Greek New Testament.

It gathers the rich Old Testament background of “rightness” before God (Hebrew šēdāqâ) and carries it forward into the gospel era where it denotes (1) the flawless moral integrity of God, (2)

the saving status granted to believers in Christ, and (3) the Spirit-wrought life that conforms to God's standards.

Divine Attribute and Saving Action

Scripture joins God's righteousness to His faithfulness and justice. "The Lord is righteous; He loves justice" ([Psalm 11:7](#)).

In [Romans 3:25-26](#) Paul displays *the cross as the scene where God proves Himself "just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus."*

Thus δικαιοσύνη is never a cold abstraction; it is God acting consistently with His own character to rescue sinners while remaining morally perfect.

Righteousness Revealed in the Gospel

"For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" ([Romans 1:17](#)).

THE REVELATION IS BOTH VERTICAL (GOD'S CHARACTER UNVEILED) AND HORIZONTAL (HIS SAVING GIFT BESTOWED).

The resurrection publicly confirms this righteous intervention ([Acts 17:31](#)).

Imputed Righteousness through Faith

Paul reaches back to [Genesis 15:6](#)— *“Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness”* ([Romans 4:3](#))—to demonstrate that right standing before God has always been graciously counted, never earned.

[2 Corinthians 5:21](#) states the great exchange: *“God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.”*

[Philippians 3:9](#) contrasts “a righteousness of my own from the law” with “that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness from God on the basis of faith.”

Transforming Ethical Righteousness

The New Testament refuses to sever status from conduct.

Having been “set free from sin, you became slaves to righteousness” ([Romans 6:18](#)).

Jesus blesses *“those who hunger and thirst for righteousness”* ([Matthew 5:6](#)) and warns against merely external piety ([Matthew 6:1](#)).

John insists, *“The one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous”* ([1 John 3:7](#)).

James speaks of *“the fruit of righteousness that is sown in peace by those who make peace”* ([James 3:18](#)).

Righteousness and the Law

Paul affirms the law’s goodness yet exposes human inability: Israel “pursued a law of righteousness” but “did not attain it” ([Romans 9:31](#)). Christ is therefore “the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” ([Romans 10:4](#)). In [Galatians 2:21](#) he states, “If righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing.” Nevertheless, the Spirit fulfills the law’s righteous requirement in us ([Romans 8:4](#)).

Eschatological Righteousness and Final Judgment

Future hope is cast in righteous terms: believers “look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells” ([2 Peter 3:13](#)).

The conquering Rider judges “and wages war in righteousness” ([Revelation 19:11](#)).

A “crown of righteousness” awaits all who love Christ’s appearing ([2 Timothy 4:8](#)).

Righteousness in Worship and Prayer

Jesus urges disciples: *“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness”* ([Matthew 6:33](#)).

The kingdom is “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit” ([Romans 14:17](#)).

Believers are clothed with *“the breastplate of righteousness”* ([Ephesians 6:14](#)), guarding heart and conscience in spiritual warfare.

Righteousness in Suffering and Persecution

“Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake” ([Matthew 5:10](#)).

Peter encourages endurance when believers suffer “for doing what is right” ([1 Peter 3:14](#)), pointing to Christ “who Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness” ([1 Peter 2:24](#)).

Pastoral and Discipleship Implications

- **Preaching:** Proclaim God’s righteous character and the gifting of righteousness in Christ ([Romans 3–4](#)).

- **Discipleship:** Train believers “in righteousness” through Scripture ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)).
- **Mission:** Like Paul before Felix, reason “about righteousness, self-control, and the coming judgment” ([Acts 24:25](#)).
- **Mercy:** Demonstrate righteousness by impartial generosity;

God “multiplies your seed and increases the harvest of your righteousness” ([2 Corinthians 9:10](#)).

Historical Theology and Church Application

THE EARLY CHURCH TREASURED δικαιοσύνη AS BOTH FORENSIC DECLARATION AND MORAL IMPERATIVE. AUGUSTINE HIGHLIGHTED ITS GRACE; THE REFORMERS, READING ROMANS, CLARIFIED JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE WHILE STRESSING SANCTIFICATION AS ITS FRUIT. CONTEMPORARY MINISTRY CONTINUES TO BALANCE THE UNEARNED GIFT WITH THE SPIRIT’S TRANSFORMATIVE WORK, URGING BELIEVERS TO “PURSUE RIGHTEOUSNESS” (1 TIMOTHY 6:11) UNTIL THE DAY WHEN JUSTICE AND RIGHTEOUSNESS COVER THE EARTH AS THE WATERS COVER THE SEA.

4160. poieó

Lexical Summary

poieó: To make, to do, to act, to cause, to work

Original Word: ποιέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: poieó

Pronunciation: poy-eh'-o

Phonetic Spelling: (poy-eh'-o)

KJV: abide, + agree, appoint, X avenge, + band together, be, bear, + bewray, bring (forth), cast out, cause, commit, + content, continue, deal, + without any delay, (would) do(-ing), execute, exercise, fulfil, gain, give, have, hold, X journeying, keep, + lay wait, + lighten the ship, make, X mean, + none of these things move me, observe, ordain, perform, provide, + have purged, purpose, put, + raising up, X secure, shew, X shoot out, spend, take, tarry, + transgress the law, work, yield

NASB: do, make, done, doing, made, did, does

Word Origin: [apparently a prolonged form of an obsolete primary]

1. to make or do

{in a very wide application, more or less direct; properly refers to a single act thus differing from G4238}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

to make or do

Apparently a prolonged form of an obsolete primary; to make or do (in a very wide application, more or less direct) -- abide, + agree, appoint, X avenge, + band together, be, bear, + bewray, bring (forth), cast out, cause, commit, + content, continue, deal, + without any delay, (would) do(-ing), execute, exercise, fulfil, gain, give, have, hold, X journeying, keep, + lay wait, + lighten the ship, make, X mean, + none of these things move me, observe, ordain, perform, provide, + have purged, purpose, put, + raising up, X secure, shew, X shoot out, spend, take, tarry, + transgress the law, work, yield. Compare [prasso](#).

see GREEK [prasso](#)

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

a prim. word

Definition

to make, do

Topical Lexicon

The Dynamic Scope of ποιέω in the New Testament

Chosen by the inspired writers almost six-hundred times, ποιέω stands behind an enormous range of activity—creation, covenant obedience, miracle, sin, worship, pastoral labor, and eschatological consummation. Whether rendered “make,” “do,” “produce,” “practice,” or “cause,” **THE VERB ALWAYS STRESSES PURPOSEFUL ACTION. ITS**

FREQUENCY AND FLEXIBILITY SHOW THAT BIBLICAL FAITH IS NEVER MERE CONTEMPLATION BUT AN EMBODIED, GOD-DIRECTED WAY OF LIFE.

Creation and Providence

In [Acts 17:24](#) Paul declares to the Athenians, “The God who made the world and everything in it is Lord of heaven and earth.” By echoing [Genesis 1](#), ποιέω locates the gospel within God’s creative sovereignty. [Hebrews 1:2](#) likewise credits the Son “through whom He made the universe,” uniting cosmology with Christology. Even the angelic proclamation of [Revelation 14:7](#)—“Worship Him who made heaven and earth, the sea and the springs of waters”—shows that creation language remains evangelistic and eschatological.

Covenant Obedience and Moral Choice

Jesus presses ποιέω into ethical service: “Whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother” ([Matthew 12:50](#)). The Sermon on the Mount culminates with the wise man “who hears these words of Mine and does them” ([Matthew 7:24](#)).

Paul applies the same verb to civil righteousness—magistrates reward “the one who does good” ([Romans 13:4](#))—and James cites it for whole-law obedience ([James 2:10](#)). Thus ποιέω links hearing and doing, confession and conduct.

Sin and Lawlessness

Negative uses expose rebellious practice.

[John 3:20](#) notes that “everyone who does evil hates the light,” and [1 John 3:4](#) equates “practicing sin” with lawlessness. [Romans 1:32](#) indicts a culture that “not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who do them.”

THE SAME VERB THAT CELEBRATES OBEDIENCE UNMASKS DEPRAVITY, SHARPENING MORAL ACCOUNTABILITY.

The Works of Christ

The Gospels spotlight ποιέω for the Savior's redemptive mission. Jesus testifies, "The works the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works I am doing—bear witness about Me" (John 5:36). His earthly ministry is summarized in Acts 1:1 as what He "began to do and to teach," an unfinished program extended through His body, the church (Acts 1:8). John piles up the aorist forms to catalog specific signs (for example John 2:11; 9:6; 11:45), culminating in the narrative's purpose statement: "Jesus performed many other signs... that you may believe" (John 20:30-31).

Miracles and Signs

When the crowds exclaim, "He has done all things well" (Mark 7:37), ποιέω voices wonder at divine intervention. Peter tells Cornelius that Jesus "went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil" (Acts 10:38).

The verb shows that biblical miracles are deeds, not illusions—tangible intrusions of the kingdom.

Sacrificial and Priestly Dimension

Hebrews 7:27 contrasts Christ's once-for-all offering with priests "who did this daily." In 9:25 the Levitical high priest "entered annually to make atonement." ποιέω highlights both repetition under the old order and finality under the new. The cleansing accomplished (ἁμαρτιῶν ποιήσας) situates Calvary as decisive divine action.

Discipleship and Ethics

Jesus' pattern-setting act at the Last Supper reveals the verb's formative power: "I have set you an example so that you should do as I have done for you" (John 13:15).

Paul applies the same logic pastorally, urging believers, "Whatever you do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17; cf. 3:23).

The verb fuels imperatives to generosity (Luke 12:33), evangelistic compassion (Jude 1:23–25), and perseverance in well-doing (Galatians 6:9).

Evangelistic Ministry and Apostolic Record

Luke summarizes missions reports with ποιέω: “They described all that God had done through them” ([Acts 14:27](#)).

Paul defends his apostleship by reminding the Corinthians, “Did I commit a sin... because I preached the gospel of God to you free of charge? I humbled myself... so that you might be exalted” ([2 Corinthians 11:7](#)).

The verb frames both the content and the method of gospel labor.

Corporate Worship

The Lord’s Supper command employs ποιέω: “Do this in remembrance of Me” ([Luke 22:19](#); [1 Corinthians 11:24-25](#)). Here doing equals commemorating the covenant meal, binding liturgical practice to Christ’s once-for-all sacrifice and ongoing presence.

Eschatological Fulfillment

REVELATION REPEATEDLY WARNS OF COUNTERFEIT DEEDS ([13:13-16](#)) AND COMMENDS FAITHFUL ONES ([22:14-15](#)).

God “will make all things new” ([Revelation 21:5](#)), translating ποιέω into cosmic renewal.

Romans 9:28 quotes Isaiah to promise that the Lord “will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness,” showing that divine action will culminate history.

Pastoral Application

1 Thessalonians 4:10 gently exhorts, “We urge you, brothers, to do so more and more.”

Ministry fruitfulness, moral purity, and mutual edification
all flow from Spirit-empowered doing, never from
meritorious striving (**Titus 3:5**).

Ephesians 2:10 INTEGRATES GRACE AND WORKS:

*“We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared in advance as our way of life.”*

Representative Passages by Theme

Creation: **Acts 17:24**; **Hebrews 1:2**; **Revelation 14:7**

Obedience: **Matthew 7:21**; **Matthew 12:50**; **Romans 13:4**

Sin: **John 3:20**; **Romans 1:32**; **1 John 3:4**

Christ’s Ministry: **Acts 1:1**; **John 5:36**; **John 20:30**

Miracles: **Mark 7:37**; **Acts 10:38**

Sacrifice: **Hebrews 7:27**; **Hebrews 9:25**

Discipleship: **John 13:15**; **Colossians 3:17**

Worship: **Luke 22:19**; **1 Corinthians 11:24**

Mission: **Acts 14:27**; **2 Corinthians 11:7**

Eschatology: **Revelation 21:5**; **Romans 9:28**

In every dimension of redemptive history—from
the making of the cosmos to the making of
disciples—ποιέω anchors Scripture’s call
to active, obedient faith.

“in order” / “to”

Summary

πρός (Strong's 4314) is more than a grammatical hinge; it is a theological signpost constantly turning attention toward communion—Father and Son, Savior and sinner, believer and neighbor. Every occurrence invites readers to ask: To whom am I oriented, and for what purpose? In Scripture's unfolding story, life and mission find their aim only when directed πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. – Topical Lexicon

2300. theaomai ►

Lexical Summary

theaomai: To behold, to look upon, to view attentively, to contemplate

Original Word: θεάομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: theaomai

Pronunciation: theh-ah'-om-ahee

Phonetic Spelling: (theh-ah'-om-ahee)

KJV: behold, look (upon), see

NASB: saw, seen, noticed, see, seeing, look, look over

Word Origin: [a prolonged form of a primary verb]

1. to look closely at
2. (by implication) to perceive

3. (by extension) to visit
{perceive literally or figuratively}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

behold, look upon, see.

A prolonged form of a primary verb; to look closely at, i.e. (by implication) perceive (literally or figuratively); by extension to visit -- behold, look (upon), see. Compare [optanomai](#).

see GREEK [optanomai](#)

HELPS Word-studies

2300 *theáomai* (from *tháomai*, "to gaze at a spectacle") – properly, gaze on (contemplate) as a *spectator*; to observe *intently*, especially to *interpret* something (grasp its *significance*); to see (*concentrate* on) so as to significantly *impact* (*influence*) *the viewer*.

[[2300](#) (*theáomai*) is the root of [2302](#) /*théatron* ("spectacle in a theatre"), the root of the English term, "theatre."]

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

of uncertain origin

Definition

to behold, look upon

NASB Translation

look (1), look over (1), looked (1), noticed (3), saw (5), see (3), seeing (2), seen (5), watched (1).

Topical Lexicon

Meaning and Nuances

The verb **describes deliberate, contemplative viewing—more intent than a casual glance**, yet still dealing with literal sight.

Used narratively, it marks decisive recognition; in doctrinal settings it undergirds eyewitness authority.

Witness to the Incarnation

[John 1:14](#): "We have seen His glory" (ἐθεασάμεθα). [1 John 1:1](#) echoes that claim. The apostolic "seeing" certifies that the eternal Word truly took flesh; revelation is anchored in historical observation, not private vision.

Eyewitness Ground of Christian Testimony

[John 1:32](#); [1 John 4:12–14](#); [Acts 22:9](#); [Acts 21:27](#). Whether watching the Spirit descend, noting miracles, or describing Paul's Damascus-road companions, the writers insist their message rests on things actually viewed. "We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son" ([1 John 4:14](#)).

Resurrection and Ascension Assurance

[Mark 16:11](#), [16:14](#); [Acts 1:11](#). The same verb records the appearances that confirmed Jesus alive and the ascension that guarantees His return: "This same Jesus... will come back in the same way you have seen Him go" ([Acts 1:11](#)).

Transforming Encounters in Jesus' Ministry

[Luke 5:27](#)—Jesus "saw a tax collector named Levi." The deliberate gaze precedes the call. [Luke 23:55](#)—women "saw the tomb"; [John 11:45](#)—"many of the Jews... having seen what He had done, believed." The observed works compel faith.

From Spiritual Insight to Mere Spectacle

[Matthew 6:1; 23:5](#).

THE SAME VERB CAN DENOTE VANITY:

deeds done "to be seen by men."

The gospel calls believers from craving
human attention to seeking the
Father's invisible reward.

Pastoral Fellowship and Mission

[Romans 15:24](#): Paul hopes "to see" the Roman church, anticipating purposeful fellowship that will advance the gospel.

Practical Ministry Implications

- Preaching should so present Christ that hearers behold His glory through the Word.
- Ordinances supply visible proclamation; congregations “see” the gospel enacted.
- Discipleship involves noticing people redemptively, as Jesus looked upon Levi.
- Ministers must resist pursuing visibility;

*Authentic service aims at God’s approval,
not public display.*

Summary

...Highlights purposeful sight that validates the Incarnation, Resurrection, and apostolic witness, **WARNS AGAINST HOLLOW SHOWMANSHIP**, and models a seeing that leads to saving faith and faithful ministry.

3408. misthos

Lexical Summary

misthos: Reward, wages, recompense

Original Word: μισθός

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine

Transliteration: misthos

Pronunciation: mis-thos'

Phonetic Spelling: (mis-thos')

KJV: hire, reward, wages

NASB: reward, wages, pay, price, wage

Word Origin: [apparently a primary word]

1. **payment for service (good or bad)**
{literally or figuratively}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

reward, wages.

Apparently a primary word; pay for service (literally or figuratively), good or bad -- hire, reward, wages.

HELPS Word-studies

3408 *misthós* (a primitive word, so *NAS* dictionary) – a *reward* (*recompense*) that *appropriately compensates* a particular decision (action).

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

a prim. word

Definition

wages, hire

NASB Translation

pay (2), price (1), reward (19), wage (1), wages (6).

Topical Lexicon

Semantic Scope

Strong's Greek 3408 (misthos, incl. the cognates misthon, misthou)

denotes the wage, recompense, or reward that is due for work rendered, whether righteous or unrighteous, temporal or eternal.

The term never signifies a vague sentiment; it speaks of an actual payment—material, relational, or eschatological—that corresponds precisely to deeds done.

Rewards in the Teaching of Jesus

Jesus employs the term chiefly in the Sermon on the Mount to expose hidden motives (Matthew 5:12, 5:46; 6:1-18). Three repeated warnings—

“they have received their reward” (Matthew 6:2, 5, 16)

— contrast fleeting human applause with the Father’s lasting recompense. When the Lord later promises, “Whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones... will never lose his reward” ([Matthew 10:42](#)), He affirms that no kingdom-minded action is too small for divine remuneration. Likewise, the vineyard parable ([Matthew 20:8](#)) stresses the Master’s right to dispense wages as He wills, underscoring grace rather than strict human calculation.

Apostolic Instruction on Ministerial Wages

Paul applies *misthos* to gospel labor. Agricultural and construction metaphors in [1 Corinthians 3:8-14](#) teach that each worker “will receive his own reward according to his own labor.” Faithful service on the foundation of Christ survives the testing fire and secures reward; shoddy work forfeits it, though the worker himself is saved. In [1 Corinthians 9](#) Paul distinguishes between a rightful material wage for preaching and a higher, voluntary reward gained by surrendering that right (9:17-18). Luke echoes the same principle for itinerant workers: “the worker is worthy of his wages” ([Luke 10:7](#)), a maxim Paul cites verbatim when directing churches to honor elders who labor in preaching and teaching ([1 Timothy 5:18](#)).

Warnings against Unrighteous Gain

NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS PRESS THE PROPHETIC THEME THAT ILL-GOTTEN WAGES BECOME A CURSE.

Peter foretells that false teachers will “suffer harm as the wages of their wickedness” ([2 Peter 2:13](#)) and recalls Balaam who “loved the wages of wickedness” ([2 Peter 2:15](#)).

Jude repeats the indictment ([Jude 11](#)).

James denounces unjust landowners: “The wages you failed to pay the workmen... are crying out against you” ([James 5:4](#)).

[Acts 1:18](#) records Judas purchasing a field with “the reward of his wickedness,” bitter evidence that silver gained by treachery pays only death.

Eschatological Recompense

Misthos culminates in the consummation of God's kingdom.

REVELATION TWICE EMPLOYS THE TERM:

at the sounding of the seventh trumpet ***“the time has come... to reward Your servants”*** ([Revelation 11:18](#)), and

the risen *Christ announces, **“Behold, I am coming soon, and My reward is with Me to repay each one according to what he has done”*** ([Revelation 22:12](#)).

These declarations secure the believer's hope and sober the unrepentant: final judgment is neither arbitrary nor generalized but an exact settlement of accounts.

Intertextual Roots

While misthos is Greek, the concept draws heavily on the Hebrew idea of sakar (“wage, reward”). [Proverbs 13:21](#), [Isaiah 40:10](#), and [Jeremiah 31:16](#) promise that the LORD comes with reward in hand, themes John explicitly imports into [Revelation 22:12](#). The righteous-reward motif also parallels [Genesis 15:1](#) where God Himself is Abram's “very great reward,” hinting that the ultimate recompense is not a thing but a Person.

Historical and Cultural Background

In the Greco-Roman world a *misthos* was a standard contractual term: soldiers, day laborers, and household servants expected fixed remuneration. Jesus and the apostles harness this marketplace language to communicate kingdom realities in familiar economic imagery. The assurance of divine wages dignifies humble service, while the threat of withholdings or punitive pay cuts through self-righteous façades.

Pastoral and Discipleship Implications

1. Motive Integrity: Public acts of piety aimed at human recognition terminate in earthly reward; secrecy before the Father secures eternal reward.

2. Faithful Stewardship: EVERY BELIEVER IS A BUILDER ON CHRIST'S FOUNDATION; QUALITY, NOT QUANTITY, DETERMINES REWARD.

3. Gospel Generosity: Ministers may relinquish material wages to gain a higher, spiritual reward, yet churches remain obligated to supply just remuneration.

4. Ethical Labor Practices: Withholding fair wages invites divine judgment; employers must treat workers as image-bearers.

5. Perseverance under Persecution: "Rejoice and be glad, for great is your reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:12) strengthens those oppressed for righteousness' sake.

6. Hope of Christ's Return: The certainty that **"My reward is with Me"** FUELS HOLY LIVING AND URGENT MISSION.

Doctrinal Synthesis

Scripture presents two complementary truths: salvation is a free gift apart from works (Romans 4:4-5), yet deeds done in grace are repaid with proportionate reward. This distinguishes entrance into

*the kingdom (entirely by grace) from
estate within the kingdom (subject to
evaluation). Far from undermining grace,
the doctrine of rewards magnifies it, for
God stoops to value and recompense
service He Himself enables.*

Key References

Matthew 6:2; Matthew 10:41-42; Luke 6:35; John 4:36; 1 Corinthians 3:8; 1 Corinthians 9:18; James 5:4; 2 Peter 2:15; Revelation 22:12.

Easton's Bible Dictionary:

Hypocrite

ONE WHO PUTS ON A MASK AND FEIGNS HIMSELF TO BE WHAT HE IS NOT; a dissembler in religion.

Our Lord severely rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy ([Matthew 6:2](#) [Matthew 6:5](#) [Matthew 6:16](#)). "The hypocrite's hope shall perish" ([Job 8:13](#)). The Hebrew word here rendered "hypocrite" rather means the "godless" or "profane," as it is rendered in [Jeremiah 23:11](#) , i.e., polluted with crimes.

Hypocrite:

Topical Encyclopedia

In biblical terms, **a hypocrite is someone who pretends to have virtues, moral or religious beliefs, principles, etc., that they do not actually possess.**

THE TERM IS OFTEN USED TO DESCRIBE INDIVIDUALS WHO OUTWARDLY APPEAR RIGHTEOUS BUT ARE INWARDLY CORRUPT OR INSINCERE.

The Bible frequently addresses the issue of hypocrisy, particularly in the context of religious practice and moral conduct.

Old Testament References

The concept of **hypocrisy is present in the Old Testament, where it is often associated with insincerity in worship and false piety.** [Isaiah 29:13](#) highlights this issue: ***"Therefore the Lord said: 'These people draw near to Me with their mouths and honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. Their worship of Me is but rules taught by men.'"*** Here, the prophet Isaiah condemns the Israelites for their superficial worship, which lacks genuine devotion.

New Testament References

The New Testament provides a more detailed examination of hypocrisy, particularly in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

The Pharisees and scribes are frequently criticized for their hypocritical behavior. In [Matthew 23:27-28](#), ***Jesus declares, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and every kind of impurity. In the same way, on the outside you appear to be righteous, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness."***

Jesus' teachings emphasize the importance of inner purity and sincerity over outward appearances.

In [Matthew 6:1](#), He warns, *"Be careful not to perform your righteous acts before men to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven."*

This passage underscores the need for genuine faith and integrity in one's relationship with God.

Apostolic Teachings

The apostles also address the issue of hypocrisy in their writings. **The Apostle Paul, in [Galatians 2:13](#)**, recounts an incident involving Peter:

"The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray."

Paul confronts Peter for his inconsistent behavior, which compromised the truth of the Gospel.

James, the brother of Jesus, also speaks against hypocrisy in [James 3:17](#): "But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peace-loving, gentle, accommodating, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and sincere." Here, sincerity is contrasted with hypocrisy, highlighting the virtues that should characterize a believer's life.

Theological Implications

HYPOCRISY IS SEEN AS A GRAVE SIN BECAUSE IT INVOLVES DECEPTION AND A LACK OF AUTHENTICITY IN ONE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND OTHERS.

It undermines the witness of the believer and can lead others astray.

The Bible calls for a life of integrity, where one's actions align with their professed beliefs. True righteousness, according to Scripture, is not merely

about external compliance with religious norms but involves a transformation of the heart and mind.

Practical Application

Believers are encouraged to examine their own lives for any signs of hypocrisy and to seek God's help in cultivating sincerity and authenticity.

Regular self-reflection, prayer, and accountability within the Christian community are vital in combating the tendency toward hypocritical behavior.

The call to live a life of genuine faith is a central theme in the Christian journey, as believers strive to reflect the character of Christ in all aspects of their lives.

ATS Bible Dictionary

Hypocrite

One who, like a stage-player, feigns to be what he is not. The epithet is generally applied to those who assume the appearance of virtue or piety, without possessing the reality. Our Savior accused the Pharisees of hypocrisy, [Luke 12:1](#).

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary

(*n.*) **One who professes beliefs he is not willing to uphold;** one who plays a part; especially, one who, for the purpose of winning approbation of favor, puts on a fair outside seeming; one who feigns to be other and better than he is; **a false pretender to virtue or piety; one who simulates virtue or piety.**

In the Bible, a hypocrite is someone who pretends to be pious or virtuous while lacking genuine faith or moral integrity.

They often put on a show of righteousness to impress others, but their actions and inner character contradict their outward appearance. Essentially, they are dissemblers who engage in simulation, concealing their true selves and motives.

Here's a more detailed breakdown:

- **Feigning piety:**

Hypocrites often engage in religious practices or display moral behavior publicly, but these are superficial acts meant to gain approval rather than stemming from genuine belief or love for God.

- **Contradictory behavior:**

Their actions often contradict their words, revealing a lack of sincerity and consistency in their lives.

- **Self-deception:**

They may deceive themselves into believing they are righteous while overlooking their own flaws and sins.

- **Judgmental nature:**

Hypocrites are often quick to point out the faults of others while ignoring their own.

- **Examples in the Bible:**

The Pharisees in the New Testament are frequently cited as examples of hypocrites, as they outwardly adhered to religious law but lacked compassion and genuine faith.

- **Consequences of hypocrisy:**

The Bible warns that hypocrisy can lead to spiritual ruin and a lack of true fellowship with God.

Christian REWARDS:

Interview with

John Piper

Founder & Teacher, Desiring God

Welcome back to the Ask Pastor John podcast. You all send us some really good Bible questions. To ask good Bible questions, you have to send us perplexing texts. And you do that with great frequency. I've said in the past that our most asked-about Bible text in our history is Romans 9:22 (we talked about that in APJ 1720) — a text rife with questions.

Well, the third most asked-about Bible text in our inbox is 2 Corinthians 5:10, the text about some form of final judgment for believers that says, “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.” We’re reading that in our Bible reading tomorrow.

We know that rewards will be unequally distributed in heaven. That’s been well covered on the podcast, as you’ll see in the APJ book on pages 363 and 364. But Caroline has in mind another angle to this question, an angle we have not looked at, about how rewards ebb and rise, based on this text.

“Pastor John, hello,” Caroline writes us. “Based on 2 Corinthians 5:10, can we lose rewards in heaven that we previously accumulated in life? Like, let’s say I have a great year and serve the Lord joyfully. But the next year I sin grievously, like sexual sin for example. As I understand my Roman Catholic friends, those past rewards would get washed away by the later sin. Or, more subtly, I have heard elderly people in my life suggest something similar. Not for sin, but in becoming intellectually incapacitated in later age, in being unable to really live a fully fruitful life for Christ, that the works they did all their life would slowly ebb away. Would the incapacities of later years, or the sins of a future year, negate or cause to wane the rewards earned from previous years?”

My answer, and I’ll try to show that it’s biblical, is no. **The good works of a true Christian will never be canceled out, not by anything. The good deeds will always have their reward that God considered fitting when we did them. That’s my thesis.**

True Christians and Fitting Rewards

Now, there are a couple terms in what I just said, a couple of critical, crucial terms that I need to clarify. Because if you get them wrong, it won't make sense. "True Christian," I said — "*true* Christian." The works of a *true* Christian will never be canceled out — not a fake Christian. Not a hypocritical Christian. True Christians are born again. They're elect before the foundation of the world. They are persevering in faith to the end of their lives. When I say, "persevering to the end in faith," I don't mean they have the same zeal for Jesus in every phase or season of their life. It's not that they have the same strength of faith in every season. I'm just saying they persevere in genuine faith to the end.

According to [Romans 8:30](#), "Those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified." Nobody falls out. Everybody perseveres to the end, according to God's promise in [Romans 8:30](#).

That means, for example, that a person may go to church for twenty or thirty years and look like a Christian. And then that person may commit apostasy and totally reject Christ, live all the rest of their fifty years in rebellion against Christ, and perish. And according to [1 John 2:19](#), that person was never born of God, because people who are born of God (that is, who are truly Christian) are kept by God from turning away and never coming back. [Jude 24](#), one of the greatest doxologies, celebrates this keeping power of God.

Now, that means that all those presumed religious and good deeds during those twenty or thirty years of hypocrisy were not viewed by God as the kind of thing he rewards — even though people saw them that way. Specifically, they were not works of faith because there was no true faith. And the only thing that gets rewarded in the Christian life is works of faith, because everything else is sin, according to [Romans 14:23](#). God doesn't reward sin. There's no thought of any rewards being canceled, because that hypocrite was not storing up any rewards in the first place. So, that's the first term — "true Christian" — that needs to be clarified in my first statement.

The other crucial term that I used was this: "the reward that God considered fitting when we did the good deeds." He sees a good deed, he sees it exactly for what it is, and he deems it appropriate to reward. God knows all our motives. And our rewards won't simply be owing to an outward act but to the relationship between the outward act and

the motivation. God sees it all. We can't see it, but God does. He knows exactly the quality of every single deed that a Christian does.

“Not only is our conversion to Christ a gift of totally free grace, but so are all our virtues and good deeds.”

Paul says in [1 Corinthians 4:5](#), “Do not pronounce judgment . . . before the Lord comes, who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God.” So, God knows the inward and outward quality of our deeds way better than any human being does. And his assessments of what should be rewarded are perfect. And because they are perfect, they can never change. He doesn't make any mistakes, like, “Oops, I shouldn't have thought that one was going to be rewarded.”

Three Reasons for Enduring Rewards

Let me give three more reasons why I think it's a mistake to say that a true Christian can lose rewards in heaven that they would have had except for some downturn in strength of their faith or dementia in their old age. Here are my three reasons.

1. God has promised.

First, there are texts in the Bible that make promises that are unqualified concerning this. For example, [Matthew 10:42](#): “Whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.” [Ephesians 6:8](#) says, “Whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord.” So, since those are unqualified promises, we'd better be careful lest we cancel God's promises by some kind of theology of reward-loss.

2. God doesn't forget.

Here's the second reason. It is a matter of God's faithfulness and justice not to forget what he has regarded as something to reward. Here's what I mean. [Hebrews 6:10](#): "God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints." It seems to me that's clearly promising, as time goes forward, that God's not going to change his mind on this. God's not going to forget that.

I think one of the reasons, as we grow older — I'm thinking to myself here; I think about this question a lot. One of the reasons, as we grow older, the question becomes urgent — whether we will receive rewards for the deeds we did thirty years ago, like when I was a pastor — is because we feel the reality of our present experience as our true life. We even feel it as our only life, because the life we lived thirty years ago is so distant. And almost all of its details and feelings, good and bad, are gone.

I mean, we may have ten memories from 1972. But we can't help but feel as though, if we get any rewards, it's just going to be for today. "I was a jerk today," or "I did something good today," or "I was faithful today," or "I was red-hot for Jesus today. And yesterday I was cool." But what happened forty years ago? Good night — that's just so far gone in my memory.

But here's the crucial thing. The life you lived ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty years ago is as real and present before the face of God as though you were living it today. It counts with him as much in his mind, for your rewards, as what you are doing today. It's that real. It's that present to God. And no sin that you commit today, if you are a true Christian, changes God's assessment of what he regarded as a good deed to be rewarded fifty years ago.

3. Good deeds are God's gift.

Finally, third — and this may be the most important thing for people to think about. I'm thinking especially because the person who asked this question referred to her Roman

Catholic friends, and this may be where the stumbling happens. One of the main reasons people think that present defects in faith and zeal and love and obedience can cancel out past virtuous acts is because they think of rewards as earned, not freely given. They think of good deeds as meritorious. So, good deeds earn merit on the positive side of the ledger of life, and bad deeds diminish merit, so that when the merits and the demerits are added up, the demerits in later life can cancel out some of the merits in early life. That's totally a wrong way to think.

Why is it a wrong way to think? Because not only is our conversion to Christ, our new birth, our faith, our repentance, a gift of totally free grace, but so are all our virtues and good deeds.

Christians never earn anything good from God. Everything good that they do is a gift of grace from God. "What do you have that you did not receive?" Paul said. "If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?" ([1 Corinthians 4:7](#)). Listen to Paul: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth." That's [1 Corinthians 3:6-7](#). By the way, just six verses later, he's talking about rewards. So, this is a context of rewards. He hasn't forgotten what he's talking about. That planting that Paul did, that watering that Apollos did, those labors are going to be rewarded freely, even though he said, "We're nothing; God is everything." God rewards his own gifts in us.

Or here's what he says in [1 Corinthians 15:10](#): "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me." So, Paul worked. He worked works of faith. He was trusting God's working in him. And he will be rewarded for that hard work, but it will be as graciously given as was his conversion.

All the good deeds that God approves and rewards are works of faith and the fruit of the Spirit. So, let's get the idea of merit for these good deeds totally out of our minds. If we do, then we will be able to see more easily that the weaknesses of our present life do not diminish God's gracious promise not to forget the good of the first sixty years.

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GotQuestions.org

Does God reward us for being obedient to His Word?

There is a saying: “Good is its own reward.” But we may also wonder whether God rewards us in other ways if we obey His Word. Does being good earn us additional blessings and benefits aside from the pleasant feeling? This question can have two answers, so we’ll look at both of them.

First of all, **God’s pleasure at obedience is documented over and over in Scripture**, especially in the Old Testament ([Psalm 91:14–15](#); [Isaiah 58:13–14](#)). God’s [covenant with Israel](#) at Sinai was very much conditional, as it was based on their obedience, and His promises to bless them depended on whether or not they kept His commands ([Leviticus 3](#)). [The Old Testament records the consequences Israel experienced when they kept or broke the covenant \(\[Deuteronomy 8:19–20\]\(#\); \[Daniel 9:11–12\]\(#\)\).](#)

When Israel obeyed, God prospered them
([Exodus 15:26](#)).

When they defied Him, He brought judgment
([2 Kings 24:2–3](#)).

During that time in human history, God offered tangible rewards for obedience to His commands.

By the time Jesus came to earth, the leaders of Israel had added to God's law and turned it into a religious system without the relationship. They believed themselves righteous because they followed the system of rules they had set up.

They assured themselves that they were God's favorites because they were descendants of Abraham and because they were so religious.

HOWEVER, JESUS REBUKED THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS of the day, saying, "*You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men'*" ([Matthew 15:7-9](#)).

The Pharisees were obedient to the letter of the law in some respects, but they nullified other parts of the law by their own traditions. They were rebuked because whatever show of obedience they had was motivated by [self-righteousness](#), not love for God.

Those who were promised rewards for obedience were rebuked many times because their obedience was not from the heart and was incomplete ([Isaiah 29:13](#); [Malachi 2:13-17](#); [3:8-15](#); [Matthew 23:15-28](#)).

So, **what about now?** Does God reward us for being obedient to His Word? We can better answer this question by recognizing that God's Word is the instruction manual for our lives. When we apply its principles, our consciences are clean and our lives function as they were designed to function. Consider it this way: a man purchases an unassembled swing set for his children. He is not the engineering type and has no experience in working with tools. But if he reads the manual and consults with people who have assembled such things before, he will be able to set up the swing set the way it was designed, and he and his children will be greatly rewarded for his trouble. If he ignores the owner's manual, however, he's courting frustration and possibly disaster. There are built-in rewards for simply following instructions.

[Psalm 1:1–4](#) explains it this way: “Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.” When we follow the way of wisdom, we reap better experiences, and those better experiences produce rewards such as material provision, relational benefits, and mental and emotional health. Those are God’s rewards for people who follow His instruction.

God’s reward to those who obey His Word can seem like natural consequences.

For example, a child obeys God’s Word and honors his parents. He finds that he is blessed with closer familial relationships, less conflict, and more trust. Are these the direct blessings of God for obedience or the natural consequences of treating parents well—or both? Another example: a teenager obeys God’s Word and avoids sexual immorality. She finds that she is blessed with less complicated romantic relationships, fewer heartaches, and an absence of STDs. Is she experiencing the direct blessing from God for obedience or the logical outcome of choosing the path of abstinence—or both?

God does not always define *reward* the same way we do.

When we think of God rewarding us for behaving well, we usually think of tangible, material goodies. But God has eternity in mind. The Bible and ensuing history are filled with examples of people who obeyed the Lord at [great cost to themselves](#).

SCRIPTURE’S GODLY MEN AND WOMEN OFTEN DID NOT APPEAR TO REAP ANY EARTHLY REWARDS FOR THEIR OBEDIENCE, YET MANY ARE LISTED IN THE HALL OF FAITH AS PEOPLE WHOSE REWARDS ARE IN HEAVEN.

[Hebrews 11:39–40](#) summarizes: “All these were approved through their faith, but they did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, so that they would not be made perfect without us.”

Obedience to the Word includes obedience to the gospel, and that carries great reward. When we accept God’s offer of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ, we are pronounced righteous in His sight ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#); [Galatians 3:13](#)). There is no longer any condemnation waiting for us because, in His grace, God considered the sacrifice of His Son as sufficient payment for the great debt we owed Him ([Romans 8:1](#); [Ephesians 2:8–9](#); [Colossians 2:14](#)). As part of that salvation, we are promised an eternity in glory with Him.

NONE OF SALVATION'S BENEFITS ARE A REWARD FOR OUR PERFORMANCE.

Forgiveness and heaven are gifts granted to us because of God's great love. The most unworthy criminal who cries out in repentance on his deathbed will receive the same pardon and eternity in heaven as the missionary martyred on the mission field ([Luke 23:39–43](#); [Matthew 20:1–16](#)).

However, Jesus does promise many different kinds of [rewards in heaven](#) for every deed done in His name on earth ([Mark 9:41](#); [James 1:12](#); [Revelation 22:12](#)).

When we walk in fellowship with Him, keeping our sins confessed and our lives free of besetting sins, we are rewarded daily with fruit from the Holy Spirit ([Galatians 5:22–23](#)), communion with God ([James 4:7–8](#)), and power to resist the attacks of Satan ([Ephesians 6:10–17](#)). Whatever struggles we face on earth in order to obey God's Word will be overly compensated in eternity with rewards we cannot even imagine ([Romans 8:18](#)).

[Google A.I.](#)

In Christianity, "rewards" refer to the blessings and benefits that God bestows upon believers, both in this life and the afterlife, for their faithfulness, obedience, and service. These rewards are not earned but are expressions of God's grace and love. They can include spiritual gifts, inner peace, joy, and ultimately, eternal life in heaven.

Types of Rewards:

Spiritual Gifts:

•

God endows believers with various spiritual gifts, such as wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, and teaching, to be used for His glory and the benefit of others.

Inner Peace and Joy:

•

Living according to God's will brings a deep sense of peace and joy that surpasses understanding.

Eternal Life:

•

The ultimate reward is eternal life in heaven, a place of perfect fellowship with God and freedom from suffering.

Crowns in Heaven:

•

The New Testament mentions several "crowns" that believers may receive, such as the Crown of Life, Crown of Glory, and Crown of Righteousness, symbolizing different aspects of their faithfulness and service.

Other Blessings:

•

God also promises to bless believers with wisdom, protection, and favor in their lives.

Motivations for Christian Living:

- **Love for God:**

The primary motivation for Christians is to love and serve God out of gratitude for His grace and mercy.

- **Desire to Glorify God:**

Believers strive to live in a way that honors God and points others to Him.

- **Hope for Eternal Rewards:**

The anticipation of heavenly rewards encourages believers to persevere in faith and service, especially during difficult times.

Important Considerations:

- **Grace, not Works:** Salvation is a gift of grace through faith in Jesus Christ, not earned through good works.
- **Rewards are not a Competition:** The focus is on glorifying God and enjoying His presence, not on comparing rewards.
- **God's Grace is Sufficient:** Even imperfect obedience is accepted by God through His grace.

In essence, Christian rewards are a testament to God's love and generosity, motivating believers to live lives of faith, service, and joy.

Paul Tripp Ministries:



Wednesday's Word

A WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL
FROM PAUL TRIPP

I have said many times that I believe that the first four words of the Bible, "In the beginning, God," are the four most important words in the Bible. Since the Bible is the Word of God, written by the almighty Creator and reigning King of the universe, then perhaps these are the four most important words ever written and, therefore, worthy of our careful examination and application.

This may sound unnecessarily obvious because if you are a Christian, of course you believe that God exists! But it's worth stating the obvious again: **the most important thing for your mind to contemplate and your heart to meditate on is the existence of God.**

The way you approach your spouse, children, parents, neighbors, boss, co-workers, employees, career, education, daily household tasks, finances, body, fitness, nutrition, sexuality, the joys and disappointments of life, your identity, meaning and purpose will all somehow be shaped by your view of the existence of God.

Or perhaps more accurately, how you *live* your everyday life *in light of* the existence of God.

If I could sit with you and watch the video of your last six weeks—in the 10,000 mundane moments of everyday life—would we conclude that you live by faith, that you believe God exists and that he rewards those who seek him, and that you want to please him with everything you think, say, and do? (Hebrews 11:6)

If we were to watch the video of Paul Tripp's last six weeks, I confess that the conclusion to that answer would be, "Yes... but not always."

There is nothing more important, more central, more heart-engaging, and more formative than my belief in and my relationship with my Savior and Lord. It is not

only the center of my worldview, but he is the source of all of my hope in this life and in the life to come.

If you would watch my video, you would see how my belief in and relationship with God motivates and directs me every day. I love him with all my heart, and everything I do is shaped by the worship of him... but not always.

We can call it ***practical atheism***. No, I'm not talking about a philosophical or theological rejection of the existence of God. Put simply, there are moments when we think, desire, speak, or act as if God doesn't exist.

We may not have any inconsistencies in our *theology* of God's existence, yet we all have functional inconsistencies in the way we *live* out that theology in the places, situations, and relationships of our daily lives.

Practical atheism is not first a function of the mind; at its root is a struggle of the heart. This is captured by one verse of that wonderful old hymn, "Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing."

O to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be;
let that grace now, like a fetter, bind my wandering heart to thee.
Prone to wander—Lord, I feel it—prone to leave the God I love:
here's my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above.

We all need to confess this struggle and to cry out for protecting, rescuing, and enabling grace so that we who profess to have given our lives over to belief in the existence, glory, power, and grace of the God of the Bible would have fewer and fewer moments in our lives where we insert ourselves in the center and act as if he doesn't exist.

Where are you susceptible to acting, reacting, or responding as if God didn't exist? May we have hearts ready to confess our moments of practical atheism as God, in his convicting grace, reveals them to us.

A Prayer for Today: God, I admit that even though my theology can be correct, my functional, daily life can often reflect a practical atheism. The way I live can often reflect a lack of trust in you, and a heart of selfishness that puts me at the center of the universe. Please forgive me, Lord, and help me to walk in a way that honors you as real and very much involved in the daily part of my entire life. I need you to help me walk with you as the center of all things. In Jesus' name, amen.

What does the Bible say about hypocrisy?

In essence, “hypocrisy” refers to the act of claiming to believe something but acting in a different manner.

THE WORD IS DERIVED FROM THE GREEK TERM FOR “ACTOR”—LITERALLY, “ONE WHO WEARS A MASK”—IN OTHER WORDS, SOMEONE WHO PRETENDS TO BE WHAT HE IS NOT.

The Bible calls hypocrisy a sin.

There are two forms hypocrisy can take: that of professing belief in something and then acting in a manner contrary to that belief, and that of looking down on others when we ourselves are flawed.

The prophet Isaiah condemned the hypocrisy of his day: “The Lord says, ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men’” (Isaiah 29:13). Centuries later, Jesus quoted this verse, aiming the same condemnation at the religious leaders of His day ([Matthew 15:8-9](#)). John the Baptist refused to give hypocrites a pass, telling them to produce “fruits worthy of repentance” ([Luke 3:8](#)). Jesus took an equally staunch stand against sanctimony—He called hypocrites “wolves in sheep’s clothing” ([Matthew 7:15](#)), “whitewashed tombs” ([Matthew 23:27](#)), “snakes,” and “brood of vipers” ([Matthew 23:33](#)).

We cannot say we love God if we do not love our brothers (1 John 2:9). Love must be “without hypocrisy” (Romans 12:9, NKJV). A hypocrite may look righteous on the outside, but it is a façade. True righteousness comes from the inner transformation of the Holy Spirit not an external conformity to a set of rules (Matthew 23:5; 2 Corinthians 3:8).

Jesus addressed the other form of hypocrisy in the Sermon on the Mount: “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the [plank in your own eye](#)? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:3-5). Jesus is not teaching against discernment or helping others overcome sin; instead, He is telling us not be so prideful and convinced of our own goodness that we criticize others from a position of self-righteousness. We should do some introspection first and correct our own shortcomings before we go after the “specks” in others (cf. [Romans 2:1](#)).

During Jesus’ earthly ministry, He had many run-ins with the religious leaders of the day, the Pharisees. These men were well versed in the Scriptures and zealous about following every letter of the Law ([Acts 26:5](#)). However, (the pharisees) in adhering to the letter of the Law, they actively sought loopholes that allowed them to violate the spirit of the Law. Also, they displayed a lack of compassion toward their fellow man and were often overly demonstrative of their so-called spirituality in order to garner praise ([Matthew 23:5–7](#); [Luke 18:11](#)).

JESUS DENOUNCED THEIR BEHAVIOR IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS, POINTING OUT THAT “JUSTICE, MERCY, AND FAITHFULNESS” ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN PURSUING A PERFECTION BASED ON FAULTY STANDARDS ([Matthew 23:23](#)).

Jesus made it clear that the problem was not with the Law but the way in which the Pharisees implemented it ([Matthew 23:2-3](#)).

Today, the word *pharisee* has become synonymous with *hypocrite*.

IT MUST BE NOTED THAT HYPOCRISY IS NOT THE SAME AS TAKING A STAND AGAINST SIN. FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS NOT HYPOCRISY TO TEACH THAT DRUNKENNESS IS A SIN, *UNLESS* THE ONE TEACHING AGAINST DRUNKENNESS GETS DRUNK EVERY WEEKEND—*THAT WOULD BE HYPOCRISY.*

AS CHILDREN OF GOD, WE ARE CALLED TO STRIVE FOR HOLINESS ([1](#)

PETER 1:16). WE ARE TO “HATE WHAT IS EVIL” AND “CLING TO WHAT IS GOOD” (ROMANS 12:9). WE SHOULD NEVER IMPLY AN ACCEPTANCE OF SIN, ESPECIALLY IN OUR OWN LIVES. ALL WE DO SHOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH WHAT WE BELIEVE AND WHO WE ARE IN CHRIST. PLAY-ACTING IS MEANT FOR THE STAGE, NOT FOR REAL LIFE.