

# Matthew 6:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

## Analysis

Jesus warns against practicing righteousness 'to be seen of men,' exposing the Pharisaical error of external religion performed for human acclaim. The phrase 'before men' indicates motive is crucial—the same act done for God's glory versus human praise has radically different spiritual value. This introduces the principle that God weighs hearts, not merely actions (1 Samuel 16:7). Hypocrisy seeks earthly reward and forfeits heavenly.

## Historical Context

First-century Pharisees were known for public displays of piety—prominent prayer positions, conspicuous fasting, ostentatious giving. These practices garnered social status and reputation for holiness but masked hearts far from God. Jesus consistently denounced this external religiosity devoid of heart transformation.

## Related Passages

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How can you examine your motives to ensure religious practices flow from love for God rather than desire for human approval?
2. What is the difference between legitimate public worship and hypocritical performance designed to gain human praise?

## Interlinear Text

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Προσέχετε τοῖς ἐλεημοσύνην ὑμῶν μήγε, ποιεῖν  
Take heed which alms your not that ye do  
G4337 G3588 G1654 G5216 G3361 G4160

ἔμπροσθεν τοῖς ἀνθρώπων πρὸς τοῖς θεαθῆναι αὐτοῖς·  
before which men to be seen which G2300 of them  
G1715 G3588 G444 G4314 G3588 G846

εἰ δὲ μήγε, μισθὸν οὐκ ἔχετε παρὰ τοῖς πατρὶ ὑμῶν  
G1487 G1161 not reward no ye have of which Father your  
G3361 G3408 G3756 G2192 G3844 G3588 G3962 G5216

τοῖς ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς  
which is in which heaven  
G3588 G1722 G3588 G3772

## Additional Cross-References

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**Matthew 23:5** (Parallel theme): But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

**John 12:43** (Parallel theme): For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.

**Hebrews 6:10** (Parallel theme): For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

**Luke 16:15** (Parallel theme): And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.

**Galatians 6:12** (Parallel theme): As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ.

**Ezekiel 33:31** (Parallel theme): And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

**2 John 1:8** (Parallel theme): Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

**John 5:44** (Parallel theme): How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?

**Mark 8:15** (Parallel theme): And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

**Matthew 6:16** (Parallel theme): Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.