

Matthew 6:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

Analysis

The promise that fasting done in secret to the Father 'which seeth in secret' will be rewarded openly establishes the pattern repeated throughout this section: God values hidden obedience over public display. The Father's omniscience guarantees He observes what no human sees, and His justice guarantees appropriate reward. This reward may come as spiritual growth, answered prayer, increased communion with God, or eschatological vindication, but it is certain and superior to human applause.

Historical Context

Biblical fasting was typically associated with mourning, repentance, seeking God's guidance, or intense prayer (Esther 4:16, Acts 13:2-3). Jesus assumes His disciples will fast ('when ye fast,' not 'if'), but transforms the practice from public display to private devotion focused on God alone.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What motivates your spiritual disciplines—desire for God Himself or recognition from others?
2. How does trusting God's secret reward free you from the temptation to publicize your obedience?

Interlinear Text

ὅπως μὴ φανῇς τῷ ἀνθρώποις νηστεύων ἀλλὰ τῷ
That not thou appear which unto men to fast but which
G3704 G3361 G5316 G3588 G444 G3522 G235 G3588

πατὴρ σου τῷ ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ καὶ τῷ πατὴρ σου
Father thy which in which secret and which Father thy
G3962 G4675 G3588 G1722 G3588 G2927 G2532 G3588 G3962 G4675

τῷ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ ἀποδώσει σοι ἐν τῷ
which seeth in which secret shall reward thee in which
G3588 G991 G1722 G3588 G2927 G591 G4671 G1722 G3588

φανερῷ
G5318

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 6:6 (Parallel theme): But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Matthew 6:4 (Parallel theme): That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

2 Corinthians 10:18 (Parallel theme): For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.

2 Corinthians 5:9 (Parallel theme): Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

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