

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

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

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

πατέρ	σου	τῷ	ἐν	τῷ	κρυπτῷ	καὶ	τῷ	πατέρ	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

φανερῶ

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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