

# Matthew 6:3

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

## Analysis

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The hyperbolic expression 'let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth' emphasizes the secrecy and unselfconscious nature true charity should have. The point is not absolute secrecy (some giving must be public for accountability) but absence of self-promoting motivation. Genuine generosity flows from love for God and neighbor without calculating return or recognition. This precludes even internal self-congratulation.

## Historical Context

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In Jewish tradition, the right hand was associated with strength and action, the left with lesser function. Jesus' metaphor means giving should be so natural and unself-conscious that even you don't dwell on it or congratulate yourself. This stands against the Pharisaic practice of carefully cataloging good deeds.

## Related Passages

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**Hebrews 11:1** — Definition of faith

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Matthew 25:31** — Final judgment

## Study Questions

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1. How can you cultivate a heart that gives generously without dwelling on your own generosity or expecting recognition?
2. What does this teaching reveal about the subtle danger of spiritual pride even in legitimate good works?

## Interlinear Text

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σου	δὲ	ποιεῖ	ἐλεημοσύνην	μὴ	γνώτω	ἢ	ἀριστερά
thy	But	doest	alms	not	know	G3588	left hand
G4675	G1161	G4160	G1654	G3361	G1097		G710

σου	τί	ποιεῖ	ἢ	δεξιά	σου
thy	what	doest	G3588	right hand	thy
G4675	G5101	G4160		G1188	G4675

## Additional Cross-References

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**John 7:4** (Parallel theme): For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.

**Matthew 9:30** (Parallel theme): And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.