

LESSON 4
HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT
MATTHEW 6:1–34



1 What is a show-off . . .

in sports? _____

at your place of work? _____

at church? _____

2 Why do people show off?

3 In what ways do Christians sometimes show off?



Read Matthew 6:1–34 and the following notes:

☐ 6:2 ☐ 6:3 ☐ 6:3, 4 ☐ 6:5, 6 ☐ 6:16 ☐ 6:17 ☐ 6:20 ☐ 6:22, 23

☐ 6:33

4 What did Jesus tell his disciples to avoid (6:1)?

5 Summarize in a sentence what Jesus taught about showing off in each of the following areas:

Giving (6:2–4) _____

Prayer (6:5–8) _____

Fasting (6:16–18) _____

6 Why would Jesus express so much concern about the outward actions of his followers?



Tax deductions, appreciation by others, power, prestige, obedience to Christ, care for others—the reasons for doing good are frequently mixed. The same action can be done with any number of different motives. Actions tend to be public, but motives are almost always hidden. Jesus expects his disciples to keep their motives focused on him. Christians cannot keep people from noticing what they do. The mistake Jesus wants us to avoid is doing good so others will notice. Asking ourselves one question will help keep our motives clear: Are we willing to obey Christ when no one else notices? Life will present us with many opportunities to test our answer.

7 Which of the three areas Jesus mentioned do you think a follower of his would find most difficult keeping private? Why?

8 In what situations is it good to let your acts of devotion be seen by others in order to set an example or be a Christian witness?

9 What role do motives play in where and how we choose to give, pray, or fast?



10 If you were taking classes in giving, praying, and fasting, what grade would you give yourself for the last three months? (Give a separate grade for actions and motives.)

	Actions	Motives
Giving	_____	_____
Praying	_____	_____
Fasting	_____	_____

11 Which act of devotion do you find easiest to keep private?

12 Which act of devotion do you find the most difficult to keep private?



13 What are some concrete steps you could take this week to make sure you are doing your acts of devotion with proper motives?

Giving _____

Praying _____

Fasting _____

14 As a part of each day, ask Christ to help you have godly motives in all you do.

A What does Jesus’ teaching about prayer have to say about praying in front of groups (6:5–13)? In what ways can public prayers be made appropriate or inappropriate? How can you be sure to follow Christ’s guidelines when you pray in front of others?

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B If the Lord’s Prayer is meant to be a model for our prayers, what specific areas ought we to keep in mind when we pray (6:9–13)?

C When will God withhold forgiveness from us (6:14, 15)? Whom have you not forgiven? How can you take a step toward forgiving this person?

D What is the difference between *planning* for tomorrow and *worrying* about tomorrow (6:25–34)? For what do you need to plan? What aspects of the future do you need to entrust to God?