



Proper Motive In Almsgiving

“Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them” (Matthew 6:1).

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“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. 2 Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. 3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: 4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.” (Matthew 6:1-4).

God cares for the poor. In Deuteronomy 15:11, He commanded “For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, **Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land**”. This command still applies today and is to be obeyed. Challenging the early Christians, the apostle John wrote “But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?” (1 John 3:17).

Therefore giving to the poor or participating in charitable ventures is a scriptural injunction, that we can not ignore without consequences. However, for it to be acceptable to God and rewarded by Him, there are certain protocols that must be observed. And this is the essence of Jesus' teaching in this text, which was aimed at correcting the excesses and extreme attitudes of the scribes and Pharisees, who used alms giving only as a means for drawing attention to themselves rather than glorifying God or meeting the needs of the poor. The salient points to note from this study are:

1) That giving to the poor must not be done to create publicity to the giver. Jesus described the sounding of “trumpet” and courting public places (e.g. streets, synagogues, etc.) as places for almsgiving solely for the purpose of getting glory from people as hypocritical, and

“... let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth” (Matthew 6:3).

will not be rewarded by God.

- 2) That God does not reward hypocritical givers implies that He rewards those who genuinely give. In Luke 6:38, Jesus commanded with a promise saying “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again”. God is not a liar. What he promises, He fulfils.
- 3) That attracting glory of people through publicising almsgiving, makes that the only reward for the hypocrites! How much better is it to be rewarded by God.
- 4) Jesus admonished that almsgiving should be done privately and in a manner that “thy left hand know not what thy right hand doeth”.
- 5) Almsgiving in secret protects the reputation of the recipients, sanctifies the motive for giving and results in reward by God openly.

The world in which we live today is full of poor people with various needs. From time to time, natural disasters (like earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, fire, etc.) and wars create severe humanitarian needs that provide opportunities for us to be involved in helping other either by volunteering or making donations directly or through reliable and trustworthy charitable organisations that work in those areas.

A positive response to the challenge of the apostle in 1 John 3:17 should be to demonstrate the indwelling love of God in us by not closing our eyes to the needs around us, but praying for guidance of the Holy Spirit on where and how to start somewhere, to help in whatever little we can. **Every little helps! A little help can make a world of difference!**