



# Biblical Foundations

## Should Our Giving Be Anonymous?

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*Be careful not to display your righteousness merely to be seen by people. Otherwise you have no reward with your Father in heaven. Thus whenever you do charitable giving, do not blow a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in synagogues and on streets so that people will praise them. I tell you the truth, they have their reward! But when you do your giving, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your gift may be in secret. And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.*

—Matthew 6:1–4 (NET)

The Bible presents a fascinating tension when it comes to charitable giving. In one place, Jesus instructs us, Don't do your giving before men (Matthew 6:2-4), which emphasizes humility, sincerity, and seeking God's reward rather than human recognition. Yet, in another instance, he says, "Let your light shine before people" (Matthew 5:16), encouraging believers to inspire others through their good works. How do we reconcile these seemingly contrasting principles?

### The Principle of Humble Giving (Matthew 6:2–4)

Jesus warns against ostentatious giving, specifically addressing those who give with the intent of being seen and praised by others. He calls these acts hypocritical, likening such people to the Pharisees who sought public recognition rather than God's approval. Instead, Jesus instructs his followers to give in secret, where only God sees and rewards accordingly. This teaching aligns with the broader biblical theme that giving should be an act of worship and love, not self-promotion.

### The Power of Public Generosity (Matthew 5:16)

On the other hand, Jesus also urges believers to let their light shine before others so that people may see their good works and glorify God. This suggests that generosity, when shared appropriately, can inspire and encourage more acts of kindness. Giving done with the right heart—one that points back to God—testifies to God's provision and love.

## Paul's Example: The Macedonians' Generosity (2 Corinthians 8:1–5)

Paul uses the generosity of the Macedonian churches to inspire the Corinthians in their giving. He openly shares their example of sacrificial giving, not to promote them but to encourage a culture of generosity among believers. Their testimony motivates others to give, showing that generous sharing can be a powerful tool to inspire greater stewardship.

## Prayer as a Parallel (Matthew 6:5–6)

Jesus's instructions on prayer provide a helpful comparison. In Matthew 6:5–6, he condemns the Pharisees who prayed publicly for the sake of appearing holy. However, this doesn't mean all public prayer is wrong—Jesus himself prayed publicly at times. The issue is not visibility but motivation. That's also the key question in giving: Are we giving to be seen and praised or to glorify God and encourage others?

## Balancing Private and Public Giving

To navigate this balance, believers should consider the following:

- 1. Check the Heart's Motivation:** If we give merely to seek human recognition, then we bypass its intended blessing.
- 2. Consider the Purpose:** If our generosity can inspire and encourage others to give, then we can benefit others when we make our giving known.

In summary, we should give with humility and sincerity, seeking God's approval rather than human applause. However, there is a place for sharing generosity when it glorifies God and encourages others. The key is not whether people see our giving but whether it points people to God rather than ourselves.