

Leader's Notes for "Taking Inventory"
Week of November 12, 2017

NOTES TO LEADERS: This week begins the "Taking Inventory" series. Our focus in this series is on "Re-evaluating what you value." This week's topic is very challenging as it looks at motive and practices.

SHARE IT

What did you do to get noticed in High School? (Or another setting)

NOTES TO LEADERS: This should be fun – try not to get too serious about this.

STUDY THE BIBLE

Read Matthew 6:1-8, 16-18. Note the contrasting **motives and results**.

NOTES TO LEADERS: Notice that Jesus introduces the topic as "Acts of righteousness." He then names some examples. Be watchful in case anyone is thinking that they might earn credits to be declared righteous before God through their actions. (See Romans 3:21-28)

6:1 – The emphases are on "being careful," who the audience is for your acts of righteousness, and the reward you might receive from the Father.

6:2-4 - "Trumpets" were used to proclaim the beginning of a public fasts. Here it means appealing to attention of people. A wrong motive yields only the "honor of people" vs. the reward of the Father.

6:5-6 - A wrong motive in prayer is "to be seen by people." The right motive yields the "reward" of the Father.

6:16-18 - Again, a wrong motive is to be seen (looking disfigured) by people (show people). Rather, the motive should be to fast privately before the Father who will reward you.

Colossian 3:22-24 - Paul indicates that the motive for servants (slaves) to obey their masters should be to please the Lord (Jesus). This promise of reward adds incentive to "work heartily" as working for the Lord who will give "the reward of inheritance."

Note also these warnings and promises.

Galatians 1:10 – This warns about seeking the favor of men. The results are that our striving is without reward and means that we won't be serving Christ in those actions.

Romans 8:31 – The promise is that if we have God, no human remove our salvation and by inference, our inheritance.

DISCUSS TOGETHER

- (1) Why is there a constant tug at us to do things before the eyes of people? What is it that we hope to gain?

NOTES TO LEADERS: For many of us, this is a constant danger. It can be fueled by many things: Desire to please our parents, what we reward in the world, needing to be liked, etc.

- (2) Does the idea of "rewards" oppose healthy motives? What if the reward is "experiencing the reality of Jesus?"

NOTES TO LEADERS: The idea of rewards from God is in many places of the Old and New Testaments. It could be misguided if we think (1) we are doing God a favor or that God owes us a reward. Rather, our obedience should always be motivated by gratitude, be love for God, and by our desire to glorify Him.

(3) How can we learn to focus on being “noticed by God?” What part of it is up to the individual? How can we also help out each other?

NOTES TO LEADERS: This should foster some healthy conversation. Don’t skip over ways that we can help each other. (e.g. When we know we are loved, we don’t need to impress people. Consider how you are when you are around a person that you know that you already have their favor.)

Praying for you,
Steve