

GRACEPOINT CHURCH

Weekly Devotional

The Uber-ised Church

Lost in the Feed: Reclaiming Your Soul's True North – Ian France – 18.10.2026

Scripture

Matthew 6:1-6; 16-18; Colossians 3:1-14

Open your mind and heart as you read the passage of Scripture aloud and then again quietly to yourself. Listen for God's word to you.

Spend some time in worship.

Observation

Matthew 6:1-6

During the Sermon on the Mount Jesus told the people to be careful they did not do good deeds purely for show, to impress those around them. If they did, the praise and attention they received was their reward. It would be far better to receive God's reward rather than that of their audience. God cares about people's motivation and how they do good deeds. Jesus expands on what He says by talking about both the wrong and the right kind of giving. At the time, it was customary for some people to advertise their giving by sounding a trumpet.

This often happened when gifts were given during the feasts. Such giving was deeply entrenched in the Jewish mind as being a way to gain God's approval, and even His forgiveness for past sins. Jesus warned them against being hypocrites and wearing a mask and playing a role for the whole world to see. He repeated that the approval of their audience would be their full reward. God did not reward someone who had wrong, earthly motives. It would be even better if their giving was hidden from themselves, so their left hand did not know what their right hand was doing.

They should not congratulate themselves for their generosity, but give solely for an Audience of One, and for His glory. God sees every act of generosity and the motive behind it. He will generously reward those acts done in secret for the right motive. Moving on to prayer, Jesus told His audience how to pray. He assumed they would pray but it was also important that they did not do so ostentatiously, in public places such as the

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PBO Reg. No. 18/11/13/690

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Tel: 011 702 4600 Emergency no.: 076 498 2088 WhatsApp Connect: 071 892 9382 E-mail: info@gracepoint.co.za
P.O. Box 1408, Lonehill 2062. 125 Duncan Road, Glenferness, 2191

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synagogue and on street corners where they could be seen and heard (and admired). He did not forbid public prayer, but He warned the people that their motivation must be true. Some hypocrites would make sure they were in a public place to pray the midday prayers, wanting the approval of men rather than talking humbly to God. But Jesus said that they were to go into a private place where only God could see them.

Matthew 6:16-18

Now Jesus moved on to the way the people should fast, continuing His instructions about the fundamental practice of spiritual life – giving, prayer and fasting. Once again this was not to be done for show. He warned them about being hypocrites and wearing masks of sadness or twisting their faces into expressions of long-suffering, revealing the supposed agony of going without food.

Pharisees usually fasted twice a week on a Thursday and a Monday commemorating Moses' ascent and descent of Mt. Sinai (Exodus 24). They made sure that people knew they were fasting. But instead, Jesus said, it would be better if they were clean and tidy by anointing their head with oil (a way of keeping their head clean) and washing their faces. In this way they would give no indication of their fasting.

Colossians 3:1-14

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul gives further instructions on practical Christian living. He has written in chapter 2 that because Christ-followers are raised with Christ they should follow Jesus' example, free of the bonds of sin, serving and ministering to others, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and looking forward to their final reward of eternal life as citizens of heaven. As they behave in this way, and focus on the things in heaven, they come to realise that their lives are hidden with Christ in God.

Paul instructs his readers to get rid of the things that conflict with their Christian lives, which he goes on to list, warning them of the consequences of living such a disobedient life. They are to turn away from all sin and live as new people following Christ's example. Every Christ-follower is part of this new family which does not recognise race, nationality, class, culture or ethnicity. Every barrier that existed between them is now broken down. Paul then goes on to describe the life of the new man or woman the Christ-follower becomes. They have been chosen by God, and they are to be merciful, humble and kind

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in their dealings with other people. They must forgive one another as Christ has forgiven each of them. And encompassing this new lifestyle, they are to put on love for others in everything they do as followers of Christ, for this fulfils God's will for His people's relationships.

Icebreaker:

How often do you make lists?

Do you note things on your phone or write them down?

How do you feel when you are able to cross a completed item off your list?

How do you manage without them?

Application

- How often do you post pictures of your 'ideal life' on social media? How are you influenced by the pictures posted by other people? Are these pictures true to real life, or do you think they are posed? How does that impact your own life?
- The Golden Circle comprises 3 concentric circles: Read the questions for each of the circles and think about which circle you find yourself in. Answer the questions that are applicable to you. If you have time, go through all the questions and consider what changes you may need to make.
 - *The outer circle – The What:* Do you go to church/small group because you feel you must, because it is a habit, or because you want to? Do you ever feel bored with the spiritual disciplines you follow, or do they feed your soul? Have you ever thought about giving up? What makes you persevere? Would your apathy change with a new mindset of enthusiastic faith?
 - *The middle circle – The How:* What values underline your How? How important is it for you to do things in the right way? What difference does it make in your life? If you were to change the way you follow your spiritual disciplines, how would it impact your relationship with God, with others and with yourself? Is a change worth considering for you? Why/why not?
 - *The inner circle – The Why:* Why do you follow various Christian disciplines the way you do? Do they make you feel joyful? Why/why not? Jesus was crystal clear about His Why. Are you? What can you do to practice a faith that fills you with joy? How will your relationships with God, others, yourself

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and creation be affected if you do centre your life on the transforming grace of Christ?

- What, or Who, is at the core of your faith? Have you found, at times, you lose the sense of following Christ as you go about your daily life? How do you regain the joy of following Christ?
- How can the group help you with the struggles you have mentioned during this session?

Prayer

Pray for one another regarding the issues raised during your discussion time and any other needs of the group.

Service

Ask Jesus to help you place Him at the centre of your life this week. Note any differences it makes. Share with the group whether this exercise enables you to say, 'It is well with my soul'.

Bibliography

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/matthew-6/>

<https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/colossians-3/>



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