

Temptations of Religion – GIVING – Matthew 6:2-4

Information:

6:1 is the basic temptation to be faced in my religious life
"Alms" the second mile beyond tithes; can also mean "deeds of charity"

Thought Starters:

What might be some contemporary equivalents to "sounding the trumpet"?

How have I seen it done in different groups?

Why do I want some people to know how much I do for people in need?

What is the different between using one hand to give and two hands?

Is the focus of my giving to meet the needs of the other or to meet my needs?

Do I give so my Father can repay me?

What commitment do I have to help the needy I meet?

What components of the personality of the Beatitudes help me focus on the needy?

What other New Testament Scriptures speak to the obligation to help the needy?

Temptations of Religion – PRAYER-I – Matthew 6:1-15

Information:

6:1 The basic temptation to be faced in my religious life
Only the pantry had a door with a lock in first century Palestine

Thought Starters:

Do I ever get the urge to “show off” when praying in public?

Where is the emphasis in verse 6 on the place or on the secrecy?

If the pantry is where the food and valuable were kept, where will I find the “pantry” in my home?

Is Jesus suggesting that the busy desk is where to pray instead of the quiet corner?

Have I ever checked up on the meaningless phrases I use while praying?

What components of the personality of the Beatitudes help me to pray more authentically?

What other New Testament Scriptures speak to the place and practice of prayer?

Temptations of Religion – PRAYER –II – Matthew 6:5-15

Free association with the following phrases

Our
Father who art in heaven
Hallowed be Thy Name
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done
 in earth as it is in heaven
Give us this day our daily bread
Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors
Lead us not into temptation but deliver
 us from the evil one
For Thine is the kingdom, and the power,
 and the glory forever.

Thought starters:

What pattern for prayer is Jesus outlining?

Do my prayers follow this pattern?

Why is forgiveness singled out of the rest of the prayer?

What components of the personality of the Beatitudes help me learn how to pray?

What other New Testament Scriptures speak to the content of prayer?

Temptations of Religion – FASTING – Matthew 6:16-18

Information:

6:1 is the basic temptation to be faced in my religious life.
Translate “fasting” more broadly as “spiritual discipline”

Thoughts starters:

What are the disciplines that Christians should exercise in their spiritual lives?

What disciplines do I exercise?

What do I do to help others notice my spiritual disciplines?

How can I exercise regularly and still get the full benefit from the Father?

Summary questions:

What is the hypocrisy that is to be renounced throughout my religious life?

How can I recognize the beginning of that hypocrisy?

What components of the personality of the Beatitudes will help me keep spiritually disciplined and fit?

What other New Testament Scriptures speak to the place of fasting and other spiritual disciplines?