



DOVER DAILY DEVOTIONS

Daily Devotionals:

On Sunday, we talked about the danger of seeking human approval and how Jesus warned against practicing righteousness for the sake of being noticed. We looked at the example of the Pharisees, who performed religious acts publicly to gain admiration, but Jesus made it clear that their reward was only temporary human applause, nothing more. The real danger of seeking human approval is that it shifts our focus away from God and makes us dependent on the opinions of others, measuring our spiritual success by how much recognition we receive rather than by our intimacy with Him. We also discussed how this applies to giving, prayer, and fasting. Each of these acts should be done with pure motives, not as performances for others. Jesus calls us to live for an audience of One, trusting that the Father's approval is infinitely more valuable than the fleeting praise of people. True righteousness is satisfied in doing what is right, whether or not anyone notices, because the only reward that truly matters comes from God Himself. Let us give, pray, and serve, not to be seen, but because we have already received everything in Christ.

Monday: Living for God's Approval

Scripture:

"For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ." - Galatians 1:10

Devotional:

We all desire to be liked, respected, and appreciated by others. Affirmation feels good, and there is nothing inherently wrong with being encouraged by kind words. However, when our sense of worth becomes tied to the approval of others, we risk compromising our faith. Paul reminds us in Galatians 1:10 that we must choose whom we are ultimately serving: people or God. If we are living for human applause, we are not fully surrendered to Christ. A life of faith calls us to seek God's approval above all else.

Jesus warned against practicing righteousness with the motive of being seen and admired by others. The Pharisees were known for this. They performed religious acts publicly to gain status and recognition. But

Jesus made it clear that they had already received their reward: human applause, nothing more. True faith, however, is about living for an audience of One. When we give, pray, or serve, our motivation should be to glorify God, not to receive praise from people.

Are there areas in your life where you have been more concerned with people's opinions than with God's approval? The truth is, people's opinions are fleeting, but God's love and reward are eternal. Let us shift our focus today and live in a way that honors Him alone.

Reflection Questions:

1. Have you ever found yourself making decisions based on what others will think rather than what honors God?
2. How can you develop a heart that seeks God's approval over human recognition?
3. What practical steps can you take this week to shift your focus from seeking applause to seeking intimacy with God?

Prayer:

Father, help me to live for You alone. Forgive me when I seek validation from people instead of resting in Your love. Teach me to trust that Your approval is more valuable than human praise. Strengthen my heart to obey You even when no one is watching. May my life bring You glory in all I do. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Tuesday: The Empty Reward of Human Praise

Scripture:

"Nevertheless, many even of the authorities believed in him, but for fear of the Pharisees they did not confess it, so that they would not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory that comes from man more than the glory that comes from God." John 12:43

Devotional:

In John 12, we read about religious leaders who believed in Jesus but refused to follow Him openly because they feared losing the approval of others. They wanted to please both God and man, but ultimately, their fear of rejection kept them from fully embracing Christ. This is a sobering reminder that the desire for human approval can hinder our faith and obedience.

Jesus warns that when we do good deeds to be noticed, we receive a temporary reward (human recognition) but forfeit eternal treasures. It is easy to fall into the trap of performing for others. We may serve in church, post about our good works on social media, or seek affirmation in ways that subtly shift our focus from God's glory to our own. But human praise is fleeting, and if we rely on it, we will always be chasing after more.

Instead, we are called to seek God's praise. He sees what is done in secret and rewards those whose hearts are truly devoted to Him. Today, let us examine our motives. Are we serving to glorify God or to gain recognition? May we be people who desire the approval of our Heavenly Father more than the applause of the world.

Reflection Questions:

1. Have you ever hesitated to follow Jesus fully because you feared what others might think?
2. Why is human praise so tempting, even though it is temporary?
3. How can you develop a deeper trust in God's rewards rather than seeking recognition from people?

Prayer:

Lord, free me from the need to be noticed. Help me to serve You with a pure heart, desiring only Your approval. Teach me to trust in Your rewards rather than the fleeting praise of people. Give me boldness to follow You, even when it means going against popular opinion. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Wednesday: Giving with a Pure Heart

Scripture:

"Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." - 2 Corinthians 9:7 (ESV)

Devotional:

Generosity is a beautiful expression of faith, but even good deeds can be tainted by selfish motives. Jesus warned against giving for show, as the hypocrites did in His day. They announced their donations with trumpets, making sure everyone knew of their generosity. But true giving is not about public recognition; it is about honoring God and blessing others.

Today, it is still easy to give with mixed motives. Whether it's donating to a cause for a tax write-off, giving in hopes of being praised, or posting about acts of kindness online, we must examine our hearts. Jesus teaches that the best kind of giving is done in secret, where only God sees. He promises that the Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward us.

Are you giving with a heart of worship or for personal recognition? God loves a cheerful giver, one who gives out of gratitude and love, not obligation or self-interest. Let us commit to generosity that flows from a pure heart, trusting in God's unseen rewards.

Reflection Questions:

1. What motivates your giving; love for God or the approval of others?

2. How can you practice generosity in a way that focuses on God's glory rather than human praise?

3. What does it mean for God to reward those who give in secret?

Prayer:

Lord, help me to give with a sincere heart. Keep me from seeking recognition and instead let my generosity be an act of worship to You. Teach me to trust that Your rewards are greater than any earthly praise. Make me a cheerful and faithful giver. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Thursday: Praying for God's Eyes Only

Scripture:

"But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." - Matthew 6:6

Devotional:

Prayer is meant to be a sacred conversation with God, yet even this intimate act can become a performance. In Jesus' time, some prayed publicly with elaborate words to appear righteous. But true prayer is not about impressing others—it is about connecting with the Father.

Jesus instructed His followers to pray in secret, not because public prayer is wrong, but because the heart matters more than the setting. When we pray, our focus should be on God, not on whether people think we are spiritual. Private prayer fosters deeper intimacy with God, reminding us that He sees and hears us even when no one else does.

How is your prayer life? Do you pray differently when others are watching? Today, let's shift our focus back to God. Let's pray not to be seen, but to know and be known by Him.

Reflection Questions:

1. How do you approach prayer: seeking intimacy with God or seeking approval from others?

2. What can you do to develop a more private, meaningful prayer life?

3. How does knowing that God sees your secret prayers encourage you?

Prayer:

Father, draw me closer to You in prayer. Help me to seek Your presence, not the approval of others. Teach me to pray with sincerity, knowing that You hear me. May my prayers be an act of love and faith in You alone. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Friday: Fasting with the Right Motive

Scripture:

"But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." - Matthew 6:17-18

Devotional:

Fasting is a spiritual discipline meant to draw us closer to God. It is a time of dependence, prayer, and worship, where we deny ourselves something—often food—to focus more fully on Him. Yet, even something as sacred as fasting can be corrupted by wrong motives. In Jesus' time, religious leaders made their fasting obvious, disfiguring their faces so others would see their suffering and admire their devotion. But Jesus calls His followers to a different way: fasting done in secret, with a heart purely set on God.

When we fast, it should not be to appear more spiritual or to gain admiration from others. Instead, it should be an act of humility before God, expressing our hunger for Him above all else. Jesus promises that when we fast in secret, the Father will reward us. This reward is not about earthly recognition but about a deeper experience of God's presence, strength, and renewal in our lives.

Are there things in your life that compete with your hunger for God? If fasting is not already part of your spiritual practice, consider what distractions you may need to set aside to seek Him more fully. Let us pursue Him with sincere hearts, longing for His presence above all else.

Reflection Questions:

1. Have you ever fasted for the wrong reasons? If so, what motivated you?
2. What are some practical ways you can remove distractions and seek God with greater focus?
3. What do you think it means for God to "reward" those who fast in secret?

Prayer:

Father, give me a heart that desires You above all else. Help me to fast and seek You with pure motives, not for recognition but for deeper intimacy with You. Strip away anything that distracts me from fully following You. May my hunger be for You alone. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Saturday: Living for the Audience of One

Scripture:

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ." - Colossians 3:23-24

Devotional:

At the heart of Jesus' teaching is a call to live for an audience of One: our Heavenly Father. The world constantly pressures us to seek validation, to measure our worth by what others think of us. But as believers, we are called to live differently. Paul reminds us in Colossians that everything we do should be done for the Lord, not for human approval. When we serve, give, pray, or fast, we should do it with our eyes fixed on Christ, knowing that He is the One who truly matters.

Seeking human approval can become a trap, making us hesitant to take bold steps of faith or keeping us bound to the opinions of others. But when we shift our focus to pleasing God, we experience freedom. We no longer need to strive for recognition or be discouraged when our efforts go unnoticed. God sees our faithfulness, even when no one else does, and He promises that our reward is eternal.

As we close this week of devotionals, let us make a commitment to live for God's glory rather than human applause. Whether seen or unseen, may our actions be a reflection of His grace, and may our greatest joy come from knowing that we are fully known and loved by Him.

Reflection Questions:

1. In what areas of your life do you struggle with seeking human approval?
2. How would your life look different if you truly lived for God's approval alone?
3. What are some practical ways you can refocus your heart on pleasing God rather than people?

Prayer:

Lord, help me to live for You alone. Free me from the need for human approval and remind me that Your opinion is the only one that matters. Teach me to serve, give, pray, and live with my eyes fixed on You. May my life bring You glory, whether seen or unseen. In Jesus' name, Amen.