

Games Christians Play

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2 Tanzania Missions Trip - Andrew
- B. Slide3 City Serve: Need **Team Leaders & assistants**. Mobilizing 30 churches, on 1st weekend of March, performing *community service projects* in our Valley. 1-2pm Agape rm
- C. Slide4 This Wed - Mission & Motto. panel (me & Kel, Dan, Jeff & Paul T)
- D. Slide5a JM5 *Next week!* Slide5b Keynote Workshops. Spend morn w/us & lunch. Exhibitors

II. Slide6 Intro: Games Christians Play (read vs. 1-4)

[Adora]

- A. Slide7 In chapter 5 Jesus gave **the moral basis** for *life in His kingdom*.
Now in chapters 6,7 Jesus described **the lifestyle** of those *who live in His kingdom*.
 1. A *kingdom* is a realm in which **the will** and **power** of a **king** are expressed.
 2. We **live in** the kingdom **Jesus rules** *when* we **do** His will. **Then** He will act in our lives and circumstances.
- B. Slide8 The major emphases in these chapters indicate that **the person** who lives, in any age, as a citizen of heaven's kingdom **will...**
 1. Seek to **please God**, who **sees in secret**, *rather than* men who judge by what is on public view.
 2. **Trust God** completely to **meet material needs**, *and* so concentrate on God's kingdom and righteousness.
 3. Express trust in God in **prayer**, *and* by looking to Him to meet every need.
 4. **Act on and obey** the **words of Jesus**, *which are* the only sure foundation for the kingdom lifestyle.
 - a) Christians who develop the **lifestyle** Jesus explains in these 2 exciting NT chapters...*will experience the presence and the power of our God.*
- C. Part of the reason why we tend to look at **the kingdom** as **future only** is that **we've missed** the kingdom when we've **looked back** into history.¹
 1. Our view of history is distorted. It goes something like this, *"Everything was great as long as the apostles lived. Then it got bad, with the church hardening into a dead and restricting institution paganized by Rome. Then Luther and*

¹ The Teacher's Commentary

Calvin brought the Protestant Reformation, and it was alive again for a while. But soon that drifted into deadness as well. Today we're just holding on (sometimes with a feeble grip), waiting till Jesus comes."

2. This portrait of church history is faulty. Historians often focus on the institutions, the popes, the cathedrals, and the books written by establishment **Slide9** men to sum up the wisdom of their age. But neither *Thomas Aquinas' Summa* nor *John Calvin's Institutes* expresses the kingdom.
- D. *The kingdom is expressed in the living witness to Jesus which the Holy Spirit has burned into the lives of those whose hearts turn to the Lord.*
- E. **Slide10a** For instance, in the 12th century, the **Waldensians**, appeared.
1. They gave the Bible to the people in the common language, stressed repentance and conversion, and also emphasized living a Christian life guided by all Scripture - and especially by the Sermon on the Mount.
- F. **Slide10b** Long before Luther, **John Huss** led a great revival in *Prague*; a revival later forced underground by the persecution which led to Huss' death.
- G. For 300 years an *underground church* existed in Bohemia, with the Gospel passed quietly from father to son, from grandparent to grandchild. **Finally** these people found refuge in **Slide10c** Germany on the estate of **Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf**. Now called **Slide10d** **Moravians**, this group provided the driving force for a **great missionary movement** leading to revivals in *Germany, Holland, the Scandinavian countries, France, Switzerland, & America, as well as England*. It was **Moravian missionaries** who met **Slide10e** **John Wesley** while on a ship going to America & introduced him to a personal faith in **Jesus Christ**.
1. So, many years before Luther, small prayer and Bible-study groups dotted **Germany**; when God called Luther to the Reformation leadership, **followers had already been prepared**.
- H. **Slide11a** Today the United States sends out thousands of missionaries across the world. **But** as late as 1800, there was **no** missionary movement to reach abroad. **Then** in 1806, **students** at *Williams College in Massachusetts* began to discuss their part in sharing the Gospel with *the non-Christian world*. A sudden rainstorm sent them dashing into a **haystack**. **Praying there together, God called the 1st American missionaries**.

Slide11b *Adoniram Judson, Luther Rice, and Samuel Mills* were to **lead** a host of young men and women, who crossed the oceans to take the Gospel to the world.

1. A movement of God began in a quiet, hidden way. *The haystack, not the cathedral, is most likely to be characteristic of the kingdom.*

III. Slide12 **FLAUNTING YOUR CHARITY (1) Give Sincerely**

- A. Having focused on relationships between *neighbors* (ch.5) - Jesus begins addressing a relationship with *God the Father*. [key to chapter]
1. The 3 examples in v.2-18(giving, praying, fasting) relate to His opening command in v. 1 and pertain to **personal piety**.
 2. Slide13,14 **Members of the kingdom of God should practice the disciplines Jesus describes so that the Father can witness them, not others.*
 3. Jesus reverses the formula in v.18 *so that your fasting may be seen...by your Father.*
- B. **Reward** - this word frequently occurs in Matthew (13x's). The term refers not to an immediate payoff but to future blessedness.
- C. **Charitable deeds** - to practice piety. *It's the general title for acts of devotion and religious duty which conform to the will of God.* lkgnt
1. Nothing is more marked in rabbinic ethics than the stress laid upon **charity** in every sense of the word. lkgnt
- D. The ESV & NIV have *practicing your righteousness* instead of **charitable deeds** - meaning **all righteous deeds**, not only *giving*.
1. Jesus wants His disciples to be **sincere** before their heavenly Father, not **ostentatious** before people.
- E. Slide15 To be seen by them - **Motives** is the issue.
- F. We should examine the **motives** behind all our generosity: [4 ways to give]
1. A man may give from **a sense of duty**.
 2. A man may give purely from **motives of self-interest**.
 3. A man may give in order to **feel superior**.
 4. A man may give because **he cannot help it**.

a) God gave because He so loved the world - and so must we.

G. Slide16 Charity can be given **publicly**, **but not for** the sake of **publicity**. Our charity should be a **holy duty**, *carefully performed*, **not for our own honor**, **but for God's pleasure**.

IV. Slide17 **PRIVATE PIETY (2,3)** *Give Secretly*

A. Jesus criticizes the **hypocrites** for intentionally drawing attention to their giving.

B. **Have their reward** - they've received their reward in the form of *praise from others*, so they'll only receive *condemnation from God*.

C. **Sound the trumpet** - *Literally?* Some think so, but probably **hyperbole**. (i.e. *toot own horn*)

1. **Maybe a play on words?** (charity boxes were shaped like trumpets, made of brass)

D. Slide18 (3) **Do not let your left hand know** - a *symbolic* saying that captures the *extreme measures* that should be taken *to avoid public praise* for your generosity.

1. Slide19 Charles Spurgeon and his wife Susannah, according to a story in the *Chaplain magazine*, would **sell**, **but refused to give away**, the eggs their chickens laid. Even **close relatives** were told, "**You may have them if you pay for them.**" As a result some people labeled the Spurgeon's greedy. **They accepted the criticisms without defending themselves, and only after Mrs. Spurgeon died was the full story revealed.** All the profits from the sale of eggs went to support **2 elderly widows**. Because the Spurgeon's were unwilling to **let their left hand know what the right hand was doing**, they endured the attacks in silence.

E. Slide20a **Should Giving Always Be Kept Secret?** by Randy Alcorn

F. **Jesus deals here w/motives.** He starts with the broad category of *acts of righteousness/charitable deeds* then moves to 3 such acts: *giving, prayer, fasting*

1. Jesus did not intend this as an exhaustive list as rabbis often spoke in groups of 3's when teaching.

2. He could have added Bible reading, feeding the poor, or raising children. Or going on mission trips or attending a particular college or church.

3. Jesus is not saying that others shouldn't be aware of our good deeds. Rather, He's commanding that we not do these things in order to receive people's recognition.
 - a) *In getting what we seek, we will lose what we should have sought: God's approval.*
 4. Christ commands us to do our giving quietly and unobtrusively. Don't cough loudly just as you're giving. Don't slam-dunk your offering into the plate. Give humbly. Don't make a big production out of it, either in view of others or in the privacy of your own heart.
- G. *Slide20b* Did public recognition tempt others to give for the wrong motives? Absolutely, as we see in the story of *Ananias and Sapphira*. Acts 5
1. *But the possible abuse of giving doesn't nullify its legitimacy. Both* the body of Christ & the world can benefit from *seeing* the attractive witness of generous giving.
- H. *Slide20c* Earlier he said, *Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.* Matt 5:16. Here we are commanded to let people see our good deeds, which means we should not hide them.
1. *This passage and Mat.6 balance each other.* There's a time for giving to be seen - when it's done at the right time and for the right reasons.
 2. *What was the name of the Good Samaritan? Oh that's right Jesus didn't give it.*
 3. *What is the best way to advertise your giving? to fulfill Mt.5:16*
- I. *If Christ established a principle in Matt 6:2-4 that other people should never know what someone gives, then...*
1. The early church violated it in *Acts 4:36,37*.
 2. *Numb.7* lists the names of donors to the tabernacle.
 3. *1st Chron.29* tells exactly how much Israel's leaders gave to build the temple, then it says, *The people rejoiced at the willing response of their leaders, for they had given freely and wholeheartedly to the Lord. 1 Chr 29:9*
 4. *Philemon 7* refers to Philemon's generous giving
 5. *2 Cor 8:2-3* refers to the Macedonians' generous giving.

6. When the poor widow gave, she gave publicly Jesus could actually see the 2 coins. Her motives were right. **That she gave visibly did nothing to nullify her good heart.**

J. **The body of Christ needs models of every spiritual discipline.**

1. We shouldn't brag about our Bible study, evangelism, parenting, or giving, **but Slide21** neither should we cover it up. **It's easier for people to follow footprints (what we do) than commands (what we say).**

2. Hebrews 10:24 tells us to **spur one another on toward love and good deeds.** It's difficult to be spurred on by what we cannot see and do not know.

V. Slide22 **FATHER FOCUS (4) Reward Openly**

A. I noticed that **secret** was used **6x's** in this ch. **Then** that **reward** was used **7x's**. **Then** I noticed that **Father** was used **12x's**. What a reminder to us to have a **Father Focus**.

1. **Not** others, **not** even ourselves...**but Him**. The **in-secret** God. (4,4,6,18)

2. We should **give** only to please our Father. We should **pray** only to please our Father. We should **fast** only to please our Father.

3. **We should give up the immediate reward for the eternal one.** **As we can't get rewarded twice.** We must **choose** which one we want.

B. **Slide23 (end)** While touring Italy, **a man visited a cathedral** that had been completed on the outside only. Once inside, the traveler found an artist kneeling before an enormous wall upon which he had **just begun to create a mosaic**. On some tables nearby were thousands of pieces of colored ceramic. Curious, the visitor asked the artist how he would ever finish such a large project. The artist answered that he knew how much he could accomplish in one day. Each morning, **he marked off an area to be completed that day and didn't worry about what remained outside that space.**

1. **What's in your space today?**

2. God has made in this beautiful world of His...**a giant mosaic**. He has given each of us His children multiple pieces of colored ceramic **aka charitable deeds**. **Have you placed yours? Will you?**