

Sermon for July 5/6, 2025
"The Pretenders" Pastor Jeff Manion



SMALL GROUPS

Share Life | Pursue God | Invest In Others

THREE THINGS TO KNOW

DON'T MISS THIS. At some point, we all need a little help. No matter what you or your group members may be going through or feeling, you are not alone. God loves you very much, and so do we. Whether you need prayer or someone to talk to, we are available for **PRAYER + ASSISTANCE**. Click [this link](#) to fill out a few details so we can connect you to help for positive change.

GROUP VALUES. This month, we are focusing on the group value **RELATIONAL INVESTMENTS**. As followers of Jesus, we're called to build meaningful relationships with those who don't know him yet. Building relationships involves genuine care, authenticity and sharing God's love through our actions and words. Consider a relationship God might be calling you to invest in—a neighbor, coworker or friend who needs to experience the love of Christ through you. Share as a group and commit to praying for those individuals and for opportunities to share the gospel with them.

GROW AS A LEADER. Authenticity in leadership starts with honest self-reflection about our motives. As leaders, we can model transparency by admitting when we've done good things for the wrong reasons and sharing how God is growing us in genuine humility. Create space in your group for honest conversation about the struggle between doing good to be seen versus doing good to honor God.

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

Welcome to our new sermon series, **TAKING JESUS SERIOUSLY**. This week, we will discuss how Jesus calls us to examine our motives when we perform acts of righteousness, challenging us to live for an audience of one rather than seeking approval from others.

ICEBREAKER

What's something you did as a child to get attention or approval that makes you laugh when you think about it now?

THIS WEEK'S TEXT

Have someone read [Matthew 6:1-18](#) aloud.

What are the three acts of righteousness that Jesus mentions in this passage?

What contrast does Jesus make between doing these acts "to be seen by others" versus doing them "in secret"?

What does Jesus say about the rewards for each approach?

THIS WEEK'S SERMON

Pastor Jeff Manion began our **TAKING JESUS SERIOUSLY** sermon series by examining the heart behind our good deeds. As a group, recall some of the sermon's big ideas and main points.

Our culture places enormous value on being seen, noticed and gaining approval from others. How do you see this playing out in our world today?

Jesus doesn't criticize the acts of giving, praying and fasting themselves, but rather the people's motive behind them. Why is motive so important to God when it comes to our good works?

We all have a deep, human longing to be seen and approved. How can we help each other redirect this natural desire toward seeking God's approval rather than human praise?

The term "hypocrite" originally meant an actor wearing a mask in a play. How might we be tempted to "perform" our faith rather than live it authentically?

Social media provides countless opportunities to wear a mask and perform for approval. How can we approach social media in a way that honors God rather than simply seeking human approval?

Our work—whether paid employment or daily tasks—can become an offering to God rather than just performance for human recognition. What would it look like for you to do your work "for an audience of one" this week?

Jesus promises that our Father "will reward" those who give, pray and fast in secret. Who has been a good example of humbly serving Jesus, not to be seen by others? How did you see God reward their humble faithfulness to him?

What's one specific area of your life where you sense God calling you to check your motives and shift from seeking human approval to living for him instead? What would be a good first step in that area this week?

WRAP UP

This week, we explored how Jesus calls us to examine the motives behind our good deeds. What's one thing you want to remember or apply from today's conversation?