

**Week 13**

**July 6, 2008 Mt 6:1-8, 16-18**

**Being Freed to True Spiritual Discipline**

# The Greatest Sermon Ever

John began the sermon this week by drawing our attention to the rhythmic nature of life (winter to summer, work to rest, etc.) and the gift of balance that it brings to us.

In Mt. 5 Jesus has given us wisdom for how to live in relationship with each other. These versus in chapter 6 describe our relationship with God. Both are important.

**Read Mt 6:1-8, 16-18**

Motto of Presbyterian Global Fellowship:  
**INWARDLY STRONG and OUTWARDLY FOCUSED**  
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Sometimes we can feel self conscious about praying in a group and be overly concerned about the words we choose. Think about it . . . Is this very much different from showing off? . . . If our focus is on our self and the public display instead of on honest communication with God then we are off track. Talk about what your group does or can do that encourages you to have authentic conversation with God together.

**Pray Together!**

What are your tendencies when it comes to work and rest? Do you find it easier to be more active or less active?  
What are your relational tendencies? Would you rather be with a group of people or alone?  
When you are on vacation do you fill your schedule with things to see and do or do you tend to stroll along the beach or lay by the pool and read a book?  
Are your tendencies similar in how you relate to God?

We tend to think of giving as an outward activity. Why is it important for us to realize giving as something that forms our relationship with God and makes us inwardly strong?

How would you respond to someone who suggests that **Mt. 5:16** contradicts these versus in chapter 6?

If giving, praying and fasting are things that we are to do in secret then what are the things that we ought to let shine? Read back over Matthew chapter 5 to answer this question. Make a list of these "outward focuses" on the chart below. Also add to the list of ways you spend time with God to keep "inwardly strong."

The things that make us INWARDLY STRONG	The things that keep us OUTWARDLY FOCUSED
Giving Praying Fasting	Loving our enemies

Does your relationship with God tend to be defined more by the time you spend with him or the things you do for him? Or, do you feel like it is fairly balanced?

In what ways could you strengthen the balance and connection between your time alone with God and the time you spend living in relationship with others?

**Application Suggestions:**

Give an unexpected anonymous gift this week. Talk to God about this before and after you give. Ask God to show you how your relationship with him can be strengthened through giving then ask him to reveal a need to you. Respond to this need in the way he calls you to respond. Remember to respond in secret. This may take some work. Watch for what gets freed up in you through this giving. Share your thankfulness and joy with God.