

Series: A Life That Actually Works

Part 3: You've got nothing to prove

Matthew 6:1-18 - [Watch online](#)

Summary:

We all feel like we need to prove we are worth knowing and loving. But what if there's nothing to prove? There's a better way, where we can accept that we are accepted and simply enjoy being who we were made to be. It's the way that produces a life that actually works.

Discussion Questions:

1. What ways have you seen people try to prove they are worth knowing and accepting? Why do you think we have this tendency to try to prove something?
2. What do you tend to use to prove your worth and/or impress God/others/yourself?
3. Read Colossians 3:23. How could focusing on Jesus in our "whatever we do" change how we view/experience "whatever we do"?
4. Is there anyone (or group) that you have felt needs to or hasn't proven themselves enough to deserve your acceptance? What actual steps can you take this week to offer the acceptance which you have been offered?
5. How can your group pray for you this week?

Main Points:

[02:08] In some way, we all feel we need to prove ourselves to others, ourselves, and God.

[02:56] The moment we accept that we are accepted we stop having to prove anything to anyone.

[04:24] Our motivation for doing good proves who we really are.

[07:55] It doesn't impress God when other people are impressed with us.

[10:42] God people don't have to prove who they are... they get to just enjoy being what they are.

[15:42] We don't have to prove anything to God because he already sees us, knows us, and loves us.

[16:13] When we don't have to prove anything to God... we don't have to prove anything to anyone else.

[20:01] We have nothing to prove because Jesus already proved his love for us.

Weekly Challenge [18:00]

Read: Colossians 3 v23

Copy / write that down. Put it somewhere visible for you this week.

Ask: What am I trying to prove? To whom?

Who do I think needs to prove themselves to me?

Transcript:

IN: For some reason we all feel like we need to prove we are worth knowing and loving...

What if there's nothing to prove? There's a better way... a way that produces a life that actually works...

So Let's talk about it... together.

WE: Do so many things to prove we are successful/worthy of acceptance/attention/love... even by people we don't even know.

- Cars/houses/clothes/phones/degrees... Result: debt and, actually, no one cares.
- Having Perfect Family... Result: End up pushing kids away... can't live up to our expectations

Social media has exasperated... faking pics to get more followers

- No one knows real you- only facade, don't feel loved, appreciated, accepted for who you really are.

Nothing new.

- Ancient graves showing off wealth
- Laws requiring different social classes to wear different clothes
- Reserving best seats of honor in colosseum
- In highly religious 1st cent jewish society... showing how important you were by how pious and holy you are...

Truth is... **In some way, we all feel we need to prove ourselves to others, ourselves, and God.**

Jesus knew this would only lead to empty life... a half life.

Knew no matter how hard we try, no matter what we use to try to prove to ourselves/others that we are acceptable...

There will always be something lacking, something missing, some fear that it's not enough.

He taught that there is a better way...

- A way that leads to a full/overflowing life...
- Life in the Kingdom of Heaven - where our worth isn't determined by what we do/have...
- A life where we don't have to prove anything to be accepted... b/c we are already accepted...

As we look at what he said we'll see...

The moment we accept that we are accepted we stop having to prove anything to anyone.


Whether call self Jesus follower or not... this is the invitation Jesus has offered all of us...

GOD: V. 1 Watch Out!- What I'm about to tell you is a big deal.

Pay attention b/c this desire to prove yourself can sneak up on you... Be Alert...

For those of you who have been w/ us and paying attention, you might be asking...

OK but doesn't this contradict what he said in **5:16**? Shine for all to see?? Contradiction?

No... as he said before (last episode)... the point is the 

- Are we doing these things to prove something or are you doing it b/c we ARE something.
- Are we trying to prove you're a good person or are we just being a transformed God person?
- Are we trying to prove how great we are or to show how great God is?

Our motivation for doing good proves who we really are.

If the motivation is simply to prove to others how great we are... we lose what we actually want/need...

He calls it our "Reward" ...

- The life in KoH he promises- full/abundant life... Peace/Joy of relationship w/ God.
- There are also future rewards, when his Kingdom fully comes and establishes new heaven/earth
- What exactly? Don't know. Should be good though.

Then gives three examples/illustrations... of what it looks like to do these good deeds in public... giving to the needy, prayer, fasting... all main parts of Jewish religion.

- Not a code of ethics... these are examples of righteous actions that can be done as part of our relationship w/ God or as a way to try to prove how great we are...
- Not IF SHOULD- Assumes his followers are and will- Point is WHY we do them

1st example... seems most common, even today.

V. 2-4 (*giving to those in need*) "How is that possible? Of course I'll know it! OR... "Well if I write a check then the person who deposits it knows it and I lose my reward?"

I don't know why we always insist on taking Jesus so rigidly and literally... he's a way better communicator than that... he's using word pictures to get his point across...

Jesus- "These people don't care about the poor... they blow horns to get people's attention... so that everyone thinks they are so wonderful and charitable.

But when your motivation is to actually help, when you love your neighbor b/c God loves them... you should be so unconcerned w/ attention that it's as if your hands aren't even paying attention to each other."

Jesus calls these generous 'trumpet blowers' Hypocrites- Comes from word for actors wearing masks

- They seem like good people but their hearts haven't changed...they're motivation is still themselves.

And that momentary recognition they want so bad is all the reward they're going to get... and then they'll be forgotten.

See **It doesn't impress God when other people are impressed with us.**

- How impressed are you when a kid is the most popular kid in their third grade?
- "Wait! ALL the 3rd graders in your class know who you are? WoW!"
- You really don't care right?

But that's what we do... whether it's giving to the needy or sounding religious...

V. 5-8 (*when you pray*)

[Why I try to do short prayers :)]

These people became so concerned about their image of practicing their religion and proving how holy they were, they actually forgot the point of prayer in the first place...

Communicating/Connecting/listening to God.

Think about it... When in love... you don't go on a date to prove you're in love... you go on a date b/c you want to be w/ that person/talk to them/be around them/smell them

- Would it be much of a relationship if you only did those things to PROVE your love either to them/self/someone else?
- If the goal of your relationship was so people would say... "Oh wow they love them so much... so cute. I wish I had that."
- That relationship is doomed... Take all the joy/fun out of it.

If you have to prove that you're it, maybe you aren't really 'it'...

- If you have to tell everyone how great you are... maybe you're afraid you're not that great?
- Who are you actually trying to convince?

God people don't have to prove who they are... they get to just enjoy being what they are.

- Talking to God comes from a desire to enjoy and know him
- Reading the Bible is to know his heart better
- The motivation isn't to prove anything... but just to **know** the God of love.

Then Jesus gives an example of what this type of relationship/connection is like.

V. 9-15 (*pray like this*)

A relationship w/ God is a real life giving personal relationship that then flows into every other relationship.

- It is a daily awareness of and reliance on the personal love of our heavenly Father.

Then gives 3rd example...

V. 16-18 (*when you fast*)

"Look how miserable I am... it's b/c I'm so holy that I'm fasting"

"Oh I bet that burger tastes good. I'd love a bite but *I'M FASTING* for God"

- "Oh wow God must really like you."

They were Putting on a show of piety to impress people. It does nothing to impress God.

Making it Personal- Now these examples might seem silly and even weird. Who would actually do this?

The idea of trying to impress people by showing how religious we are doesn't really seem to be an issue in our culture/community...

- Maybe in some church circles or in the Bible-Belt...
- But in the PNW most of us aren't going to try to prove how great we are through our loud praying and miserable fasting.

So maybe it's not our piety we use to try to prove ourselves...

Maybe it's our success/career/wealth/cars/houses/clothes

Maybe it's our knowledge/degrees/appearance/work ethic/ talent

Or maybe we try to impress people with our children/their intelligence/abilities/behavior

Maybe it's our commitment to causes/values/justice/ the environment/the country...

The WHAT isn't bad... but it's the WHY that really matters

We are wearing ourselves out trying to prove ourselves to others, trying to impress people...

- Who, in the long run, don't care what we prove b/c they are so busy trying to prove how great they are.

And if we're honest and if we believe there is a God or universal power of some kind we also try to prove ourselves to him/it by doing enough good... doing all the things we think we should...

But listen... You don't have to prove anything to God.

Why? Did you notice the common thread throughout what Jesus has been saying...

- V. 4- Give your gifts in private, and *your Father, who sees everything*, will reward you.
- V. 6- Then *your Father, who sees everything*, will reward you.
- V. 8- ... for *your Father knows exactly what you need* even before you ask him!
- V. 18- Then no one will notice that you are fasting, *except your Father, who knows what you do in private*. And *your Father, who sees everything*, will reward you.

We don't have to prove anything to God because he already sees us, knows us, and loves us.

What we are talking about isn't SELF-CONFIDENCE- It's confidence in God and HIS love.

If have kids... Why do you love them?

- What did they do to prove to you they were worthy/successful enough for you to notice them?

No that's what Bad parents do, they make their kids feel like they have to prove themselves to earn love/attention. And that's not God.

God is the perfect Father. He loves you b/c he's chosen to and will always choose to...

And since he is actually GOD... *HIS* opinion is all that matters. *HIS* reward is all that matters.

When we don't have to prove anything to God... we don't have to prove anything to anyone else.

Who cares what the other 3rd graders think?

And when you can finally accept and experience this kind of acceptance/care/love... you start to change... You find confidence in his view of you... and you want to know this loving God more and more... you want to be more and more like your heavenly Dad.

Not in order for him to approve of you.. But b/c it's who you are and you can't help but offer his love to those that he loves.

YOU: What are we trying to prove? Who are we hoping others see us as? What are we trying to do to impress the world/God?

Relax.

All of us are invited to a better/fuller life in the KoH.

But it doesn't just happen... we have to choose to accept Jesus' invitation

- If there's never been a point in your life...

This life takes practice... it doesn't magically happen. We are so wired to try to get the approval of others... so trained to need to prove our value/worth in order to be accepted.

For all of us let's start/continue practicing...

Read: Colossians 3:23

Copy / write that down. Put it somewhere visible for you this week.

Ask:

- **What am I trying to prove? To whom?**
- **Who do I think needs to prove themselves to me?**

The acceptance/forgiveness Jesus offers you is what we all are expected to give to each other.

Maybe it's time to offer it and let some people off the hook?

WE: Jesus offers all of us true life... where we don't have to prove anything to anyone... even him.

We don't have to worry about who's watching or whether or not someone is impressed w/ us.

We just need to choose to accept his acceptance and enjoy practicing, to focus on God's acceptance of us as we offer that same acceptance to those around us...

This is the life that actually works.

This is the life that your neighbors, kids, grandkids, and your friends are all longing for.

It's available to all of us b/c of and through Jesus... who proved his love by living, dying, and rising for us.

We have nothing to prove because Jesus already proved his love for us.