

IMPACT

I **M**ust **P**ersonally **A**cknowledge **C**hrist **T**oday
Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own under-
standing; *in all your ways acknowledge Him* and He shall direct your path.
Proverbs 3:5-6

Passage: Matthew 6:1-8 “*Take heed* that you do not do your **charitable deeds** before men, *to be seen by them*. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, *that they may have glory from men*. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, *that your charitable deed may be in secret*; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. And when you **pray**, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, *that they may be seen by men*. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, *pray to your Father who is in the secret place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.” 16-18 “Moreover, when you **fast**, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces *that they may appear to men to be fasting*. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is *in the secret place*; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

**‘Showtime’ or Alone
Time?**

Quote: Psalm 91:1 “He who dwells *in the secret place of the Most High* Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

The Lord’s example of a prayer that honors God is sandwiched between teaching on the need for *private intimacy* when it comes to our worship of God in practical righteousness, in prayer and in fasting. Jesus Himself set the supreme example. Matthew writes, And when (Jesus) had sent the multitudes away, He

went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.”^{14:23} If the Son of God needed intimate time with the Father, away from the distractions and demands of life, one thing is certain—we do, too! The motive behind Christ’s charitable deeds, prayers and fasting was the desire for God to receive glory. We must ask ourselves some hard questions, the answers to which require calm reflection and honesty. What do my acts of practical righteousness and my prayer life say about my intimacy with God? Do I ever fast at all out of a burden so great that it takes precedence over the basic necessities of life? Ouch!

Our joy in the Lord reflects our intimacy with Him as we seek to meet the needs of others in His name, as we intercede in prayer before the throne of grace, and as we demonstrate through fasting our passion for His will to be done in those areas of life that burden us. Our intimacy with God is inseparable from our consistent devotion to His Word and dependency upon His Spirit.

From Psalm 31

In Thee, O LORD, I place my trust.
Be Thou, dear Father, near.
For thy name's sake, now lead and guide
Through trials, doubts and fears.
Beneath 'Thy wings' my spirit rests.
Redeemed, I can rejoice!
Though pressed by troubles Thou dost know,
I hear Thy still small voice.
Sweet thought that calms my troubled heart
And bids the shadows flee--
My times are in Thy hand, O Lord;
I dwell secure in Thee.
How great thy goodness, gracious God,
To all who fear Thy name!
The secret of Thy presence hides
Me from both harm and shame.
Thy marv'lous kindness Thou hast shown
E'en when I felt adrift.
For others, keep me strong and true;
Make hope Thy gracious gift.