

I know a person who spent quite a bit of time and money making blankets, hats, gloves, etc. for homeless people. I mean literally making a hundred of them each summer and fall so she could take them to the homeless mission at the beginning of each winter. She often made a big deal telling everyone that she did this and gave the “count” of how many. They were quite nice, and I am sure they were greatly appreciated by the recipients. I see absolutely nothing wrong with doing this. I feel fairly certain when I say that the Lord appreciated it too. The only problem is that by telling everyone about it, making sure that she was noticed and appreciated (quite an ordinary human trait), she forfeited a heavenly reward for these great acts of kindness and charity. Matthew 6:1 is pretty clear about this. **We only get a “reward” once – we can decide to take it on earth with the honor of men or wait until we get before the Bema Seat and get it there.**

One other thing we might consider is that **the “reward” of men usually only lasts a few minutes at best.** They say how great you are, maybe put something in the church bulletin or hey, if it’s “big enough,” you might even get your name on a building. But even that “big” pales in comparison to the reward in heaven. We are told that **Jesus’ rewards “last for eternity”- now THAT’S a REWARD worth waiting for!**

PROBLEM #2

Another problem with doing things so that others notice and say, “Thank you” or reward you in some other way is the grave danger needing, wanting, expecting or accepting it puts us in. **That danger is called – PRIDE.** Pride is one of the most insidious sins. For one thing, it presupposes that we have anything to give to someone else. Don’t all things come from God in the first place? So, who are we to act as if good things come from us rather than God?

*1 Corinthians 4:7 For who regards you as superior? **What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?***

*James 1:17 **Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.***

*Mathew 5:16 **Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.***

*Proverbs 16:18 **Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.***

Not too long ago I attended a Christian conference that featured several young speakers all telling about the “good things they were doing for God.” I’ll admit that most of them were actually quite good things (like the lady who was making blankets and hats). I chuckled when some of them felt so good about themselves because they were “giving away some of their profits” while others were getting others to give money to them so they could give it away. But that’s not my point.

My point is that they were there – to be blunt – to brag, to make sure that everyone knew what they were doing (under the “guise” of encouraging others to do the same). **The focus of the conference was them. The promoters of the conference invited and encouraged them to do so.** In my opinion, shame on them (the conference promoters). By promoting this they (1) “helped” ensure that these young entrepreneurs would not get a heavenly (eternal reward) but rather substituted it for cheap praise for the weekend, and (2) set them up for the great possibility of “a fall” because of pride.

This is quite sad, if you ask me. It is bad enough when we do this to ourselves. Let's be very careful not to bring others into it as well.

So, what is the answer to this issue?

1. **As often as possible – do your good works “in secret”** – be quiet about it. Do it with joy. It's actually quite “fun” to allow people to wonder “where did this come from?” (Matthew 6:3)
2. If others see or notice, **be quick to promote the true originator of the gift or service** (Matthew 5:16). I used to like to say, “I am able to do this because God “prepaid me” – so it's really His money (etc.) not mine, I'm one of His bookkeepers. He wanted you to have this so thank Him, not me, please.” Genuinely and sincerely ask people not to thank you but point them to God instead.
3. Be especially mindful of people thanking and or praising you for praying. **Watch out of the title/label of “prayer warrior.”** This is especially dangerous. See [To Pray or Not to Pray](#) blog.
4. Pray, **asking God to help you maintain a proper perspective on these things** – to protect you from the sin of pride, to properly view these things as His good works – not yours. And to be grateful that He plans to reward you anyway. Does it get any better than that?

For more information about **eternal rewards**, I am happy to suggest two good books from writers I trust:

Heavenly Rewards by Dr. Mark Hitchcock

Your Eternal Reward by Dr. Erwin Lutzer

Maranatha my friends!

ⁱ Heavenly Rewards, © 219 by Dr. Mark Hitchcock, page 61 – note this is not referring to loss of salvation, but disqualification from rewards.