

# SWISS ARMY KNIFE

Week 3

## SHARE

What is one way you've blessed someone recently?

## SEEK

### Giving

“The heart of the matter is the matter of the heart.” That’s what spiritual formation professor James Bryan Smith always says. And when we think about the famous Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chapters 5-7, Jesus is dealing exactly with that very issue, the heart, especially when it comes to giving.

In Matthew 6.1-4, Jesus speaks with greatly exaggerated expressions called hyperbole. He does this so that His point is not missed. “When you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets...to be honored by others.” Imagine blowing a trumpet every time you did something nice for someone. How selfish would that be? He also says, “When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret.” But our hands are connected to our bodies! This is physically impossible. The force of Jesus’ message is clear: give without making a show of it, even to yourself! What do I mean?

Believe it or not, some people give only to fulfill personal motives; they want to feel good about doing something good. As many preachers have said before, if Christ is not the center of everything to you, then something else is. Here is one example. Missions organizations have had a growing awareness that missions simply cannot be for the sake of feeling good or personal fulfillment; rather, missions are for the benefit of those to whom the missionary is sent. This seems like an obvious thing and should have been the goal from the start. So why is this novel idea being rediscovered in the last two decades? Because the heart is subject to corruption. Many have gone out into the world as missionaries, but with the wrong heart-motives. People lose their way. They turn inward. This is just one example of the heart’s intentions sneaking in without our knowing. Jesus addresses them here.

When Jesus says to give in secret, He does not simply mean doing things anonymously; rather, the context is all about *show*. If you are going to give to others, assess your heart. Let the blessing truly be about the *other* and not yourself!

# SEE

GIVING

DO YOU AGREE THAT “THE HEART OF THE MATTER IS THE MATTER OF THE HEART”? WHY OR WHY NOT?

ACCORDING TO GOOGLE DICTIONARY, “HYPERBOLE” ARE EXAGGERATED STATEMENTS OR CLAIMS NOT MEANT TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY. IS THIS TRUE OF JESUS’ WORDS IN MATTHEW 6.1-4? SHOULD WE NOT TAKE HIS WORDS LITERALLY HERE?

THE POINT OF HYPERBOLE IS TO MAKE YOU SAY, “REALLY, JESUS? ARE YOU SERIOUS?” AND THEN JESUS CAN ASK YOU THE SAME, “ARE YOU?” TAKE A LOOK AT MATTHEW 6.1-4. WHAT IS THE POINT OF THE PASSAGE? WHAT IS JESUS SO SERIOUS ABOUT?

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE FEELINGS YOU GET WHEN YOU GIVE/BLESS OTHERS? THESE ARE PROBABLY NOT BAD FEELINGS. ON THE OTHER HAND, JESUS SUGGESTS THAT THESE FEELINGS NEED TO BE KEPT IN THEIR PROPER BALANCE. HOW CAN THIS BE DONE?

Please take a few moments to pray with and for one another