

International Bible Lessons Commentary

Matthew 6:16-18

New Revised Standard Version

International Bible Lessons

Sunday, February 1, 2015

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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Lessons Series*) for **Sunday, February 1, 2015**, is from **Matthew 6:16-18**. Please Note: This study is to accompany **Daniel 1:1-21**. **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** for this lesson will be found in the Commentary on Daniel 1. **Study Hints for Discussion and Thinking Further** discusses the questions below to help with class preparation and in conducting class discussion: these hints are available on the **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** website along with the *International Bible Lesson* that you may want to read to your class as part of your Bible study.

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Matthew 6:16-18

(Matthew 6:16) “And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.

Jesus took it as a matter of religious practice that the Jews would fast from time to time. Jesus indicated that fasting and some other religious practices should be a private matter between the one who is fasting and God. If you want people to notice that you are religious and that is why you do religious activities, Jesus said that the notice other people give you will be your reward.

(Matthew 6:17) But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face,

Daniel and his friends did not want to defile themselves in the eyes of God. Their change of diet was between God, themselves, and the one guard that they asked to help them. Daniel and his friends sought to honor and obey their holy God, and God rewarded them in the royal Babylonian court. What God wants done in private, others do not need to know.

(Matthew 6:18) so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

All of our religious practices should be done to honor God supremely and not to draw attention to ourselves. Our public expressions of piety, prayer, service, and worship – which sometimes must be done in the presence of others because we are to gather ourselves together in fellowship and worship – should be done to point people to God and His Word, to Jesus, and the way of salvation – not to ourselves. Then, God will give us the reward we really seek – the assurance of His approval and presence with us as we seek to serve Him and lead others to saving faith in Christ.

Begin or close your class by reading the short weekly *International Bible Lesson*.

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