

## **Peace for the Journey ... July 7, 2010**

Scripture Reading: [Matthew 6:1-13](#)

Christian life is a two-handed endeavor.

On one hand we are called to follow Jesus as his disciples and then sent into the world to be witnesses of God's saving grace. (See [Matthew 28:18-20](#), [John 20:21](#), and [Acts 1:8](#).) But on the other hand we are taught by Jesus to practice our piety in private, not for credit or reward or the attention of others. This is one of the paradoxes of Christian life. It is not *either/or*. It is *both/and*. We don't choose between having a personal relationship with God or serving God in the world. We don't have to choose between following Jesus as his disciple or being his witness. According to the New Testament, we do both: we grow in our faith as we give anonymously and spend time alone with God in prayer **and** we share our faith as we witness to our experience of God's saving grace. In fact, one informs the other.

If we follow the logic of Matthew's Gospel, we come to see that the only way we can effectively obey Jesus' command to make disciples (in Matthew 28) is by obeying Jesus' command to practice our piety (in Matthew 6.)

So ...

When was the last time you did something nice for someone anonymously?\* When was the last time you shut yourself away (metaphorically if not physically) to spend time alone with God in prayer?

According to Jesus, these habits of discipleship will prepare you to be his witness in the world.

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Dear God: Thank you for the saving grace you offer through Jesus. Thank you also for the words of Jesus that teach me how to live with you. Help me to trust that I don't need to get credit for my actions and help me to be spiritually prepared to serve you in the world. Amen.

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\*In today's society, anonymity is more often used for criticism, cruelty, and complaints than for compliments, compassion, and charity.