

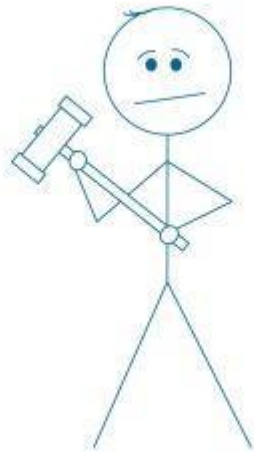
# Matthew 6:1–18

The Savior Teaches His Disciples to Do Righteous Works

Jesus continued His Sermon on the Mount, teaching that we should do good works to please our Heavenly Father and not to gain attention from others. In this lesson, you will have the opportunity to evaluate your motives for doing good works and decide how you would like to improve.

## Our motives

Think about the following statement: Gustavo fixed his neighbor’s fence.



- What do you think about Gustavo?

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Would your opinion change if Gustavo fixed the fence because he broke it in a fit of rage? What if he fixed it as part of a service project that his mom made him attend? What if he fixed it because he didn’t want his neighbor’s dog coming into his yard or because he was trying to impress his neighbor’s daughter? Or what if he simply wanted to be kind?

- Why are our motives important?

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We read in [Matthew 6](#) that the Savior continued His Sermon on the Mount and taught about motives for doing good works. To help you think about the reasons you do good works such as ministering, serving others, praying, and attending seminary, do the following activity.

Fill out the chart as follows:

What are three good works you have done in the past week? (List one per row.)	What were your reasons for doing them?	How did you feel after you did these good works?

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Read [Matthew 6:1–6, 16–18](#), looking for what the Savior taught about our motives for our righteous acts. The word *alms* refers to “acts of religious devotion” ( [verse 1](#), footnote *b*), such as giving to the poor. The word *hypocrites* refers to those who are “pretenders” ( [verse 2](#), footnote *a*).

- How would you summarize what the Savior taught?

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It is important to understand that public prayer is not wrong simply because it is not done “in secret” ( [Matthew 6:6](#)). Prayer and other religious practices can be performed publicly if they are performed with sincerity, devotion, and a desire to glorify God. This is also true in regard to fasting. The phrases “sad countenance” and “they disfigure their faces” in [Matthew 6:16](#) refer to individuals in Jesus’s time who made outward displays of their fasting to draw attention to themselves.

- Why do you think the Lord cares so much about our motives, even when we are performing righteous acts?

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Look back at your chart and compare your reasons for the good works you have done to what the Savior taught as recorded in [Matthew 6](#) .

- Why do you think you should “strive to serve for the reasons that are highest and best”? (Dallin H. Oaks, “[Why Do We Serve?](#)” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 13).

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- If someone were struggling to act for the right reasons, what would you recommend they do?

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President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, then of the First Presidency, taught about the Savior’s motives in performing His labors.

*The greatest, most capable, most accomplished man who ever walked this earth was also the most humble. He performed some of His most impressive service in private moments, with only a few observers, whom He asked to “tell no man” what He had done [see [Luke 8:56](#)]. When someone called Him “good,” He quickly deflected the compliment, insisting that only God is truly good [see [Mark 10:17–18](#)]. Clearly the praise of the world meant nothing to Him; His single purpose was to serve His Father and “do always those things that please him” [ [John 8:29](#) ]. We would do well to follow the example of our Master. (Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “[On Being Genuine](#),” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2015, 83)*

Think of examples that illustrate the Savior’s motives for doing His work.

- What impresses you about these examples?

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- How do these examples increase your understanding of the Savior's love and why He atoned for our sins?

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Answer the following questions:

- How do you feel about your motives for doing good works?

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- In what ways can your motives for doing good works influence your relationship with Heavenly Father?

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- What is one thing you can do to follow the Savior's example in doing good works?

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