

A Harmony of the Gospels

The Citizen of God's Kingdom

The Kingdom citizen extends God's love to all people. Matthew 5:43-48

Extending God's love to the hardest to love will take care of our love for everyone else.

God's kind of love is always expressed in action.

Expressing this type of love is one of the most notable distinctions of the follower of Christ.

The Kingdom citizen is genuine in service.

Matthew 6:1-4

Our motive in our service to God is as important as the service.

Note that service to others is an expected part of the life of a kingdom citizen.

Jesus speaks to a present practice of service designed to call attention to itself

Our Father sees and knows.

The Kingdom citizen is genuine in worship. Matthew 6:5-18

Prayer

Do not pray to try to impress people like the hypocrites

Do not pray in repetitious formula like the pagans

Pray in a way that:

- Honors God and our relationship to Him.

- Submits to His will

- Expresses dependence on Him for every need

The Kingdom citizen is genuine in worship.
Matthew 6:5-18

Prayer

Jesus' only comment on the prayer reflects His frequent teaching that the one forgiven will forgive.

The Kingdom citizen is genuine in worship.
Matthew 6:5-18

Fasting

The day of Atonement was the only fast prescribed by the Mosaic law.

In Jesus' day added to this was fasting on the first day of the new year and a fast commemorating past calamities such as the destruction of the temple at the fall of Jerusalem.

Other groups like the Pharisees fasted at various other times. Fasting is mentioned as a practice of the prophetess Ana as she served and worshipped in the Temple.

The Kingdom citizen is genuine in worship.
Matthew 6:5-18

Fasting

Individuals may fast or a fast could be observed by groups of people:

Expressing mourning (David and Israel at the death of Saul and Jonathan 1 Samuel 1:12)

Sign of repentance (People of Nineveh Jonah 3:5-7)

Preparation for service (Jesus Luke 4:1-2; Saul Acts 9:9)

Seeking God's direction (Antioch church leaders Acts 13:1-3)

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Fasting

Fasting can easily lend itself to an outward show of piety that is not a reflection of the heart. (See Isaiah 58)

Jesus likewise does not discourage or condemn fasting but warns against misuse of it.