

February 26, 2023 – First Sunday in Lent

Who's Checking Your Status?

[Matthew 6:16-18](#)

18 Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you.

You know how when you're in a waiting room or other public space where people are gathered but separate, there's always that one person who is carrying on a phone or other conversation at a volume much greater than could possibly be necessary? Or they're loudly disciplining their children or commenting on what's on the waiting room television or radio.

I'm going to let you in on one of my trademark phrases. (I'm kidding. There's no trademark; use it if you wish.) But I call this *doing performance life*. And it's one of my pet peeves. These folks are clearly "performing" their life for the benefit of or to get a reaction from the people around them.

Considering our current culture's preoccupation with social media, there's a great temptation for each of us to do the same. There's nothing wrong with putting your best self forward on social media, but when it comes to things of the spirit, who is our target audience?

Do we act because it would be pleasing to God, or are we looking for likes or hearts from our peers? In these verses from Matthew, Jesus warns the early Christians not to simply "perform" their spiritual disciplines publicly for the recognition and acknowledgment of those around them. He makes clear that it is God who sees your actions (even if you don't post them), and it is God who will reward you accordingly.

During these days of Lent, I want to encourage us to remember that taking up or giving up some discipline or action during Lent is about more than updating our profile status.

This is a chance to focus on and work on our relationship with God, not increase followers. If anything, we should work on our FOLLOWING – following the one who paid the price for our sins. The path to the gates of Heaven is not paved with blue thumbs-ups and red hearts.

Let's stay mindful that it's God who continually checks our status: the status of our hearts, intentions, thoughts, and even those actions done in secret. And it is only His "like" or approval that truly matters.

Prayer: Almighty God, may any performance of my life be under your direction. May each note represent a step on the path to your side, making a melody pleasing to your ear, lovingly sung from my heart directly to yours. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

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