

GIVING GOD'S WAY

Matthew 6:2, "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. (NIV)

Matthew 6:2-4, "So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3 But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4 so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." (NIV)

There was a custom in Palestine which had been observed many years ago to which these verses may have reference. When concluding a bargain or when coming to a friendly agreement, the two individuals would extend the forefinger of their right hand and the forefinger of their left hand and hold them parallel to each other. They each would rub their two fingers together and speak the words 'right, right' or 'together, together' over and over.

This practice was to show all around that they had come to a friendly agreement or completed a contract of some kind. This was done in the open so that all could see that each was happy with what they were doing. Thus, they had witnesses to the fact that they both agreed on whatever they were doing.

It is not known if this custom was being done at the time of Christ. But if it were, it would help explain what Christ was saying in the above verses. Our alms to God are not to be done in a way that we make sure everyone sees what we are doing. Our alms to God are to be done quietly and in secret. We do not put on a show so that others are impressed or so that they are witnesses to what we have done in our giving.

Our right hand does not need to know what our left hand is doing when we give to the Lord. Besides, God is Spirit. There would be no way to do the above custom with God. And we are not making a contract with God nor are we making a friendly agreement when we give our alms. We are giving a portion of what God has blessed us with back to Him because we love Him and He has commanded us to give.

This explanation is true even if the finger custom was not being done at the time of Christ. Do not make a show of what you give to God. Give to Him in love and in a quiet way.