

Putting on a Show

Scripture Reading — Matthew 6:16-18

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do”
—Matthew 6:16—

Jerry made a commitment to get physically fit, and everyone could tell. He had purchased everything that he thought would be necessary: new shoes, fitness apparel, workout videos, a gym membership, and a notebook to help him track his progress. He regularly made a scene as he left work to go to the gym for a workout during his lunch break.

Though everyone noticed a change in Jerry’s routine, no one was able to discern a change in his fitness level. Even though his friends noticed his gym bag and different schedule, his body had not changed.

None of Jerry’s friends realized that when he went to the gym, he gave a half-hearted effort to lift a few weights, read a magazine while walking slowly on the treadmill, and enjoy twenty minutes in the hot tub before showering and returning to work.

Jesus warned his disciples about half-hearted efforts to grow nearer to God. In those days, many people approached spiritual growth in a way like Jerry approached physical fitness. The Pharisees would make a tremendous show about fasting, but they were more interested in showing their piety to others than in growing nearer to God.

If our spiritual habits are just shallow attempts to impress others, we will probably have no more than a shallow walk with God.

Prayer

Lord, help me to avoid the temptation to appear holier than I am. Work in me to make me new. In Jesus, Amen.

Devotion topics: [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#), [Transformation](#)

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