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Anonymity, Intimacy and Appreciation

Some people may be unnecessarily confused about biblical instructions on anonymity. There are scriptures that inform us on how we should give anonymously and not for the sake of receiving credit from any others; excepting indeed receiving appreciation from God (Mt. 6:1-4). Yet, clearly this is an incomplete understanding. There are many times when it is godly and extremely important for the needs of others to know from whence a kindness came; where a false humility would be detrimental to others.

We are made in God's image. God at times gives *anonymously* (Mt. 5:45b, Acts 17:28, 30); i.e. is the unknown benefactor, whom at other times he clearly informs the recipients of his gracious gift-giving; even insisting on receiving acknowledgement and appreciation (Ja. 1:16-17; Dt. 10:21). For those with whom he has no relationship, the giving is perhaps most commonly left *anonymous* (cf. Cor. 1:21, Rom. 1:21 & Mt. 5:45b). But when it comes to his family, God clearly informs his family that he is providing and sustaining them. He unequivocally wants credit for it (Ja. 1:17; Eph. 5:20). This is not because God has a human ego, for he is perfect and above such perverted human motives. But he knows disclosure will help bind the holy relationship closer together.

The greater the giver's sacrifice and receiver's benefit along with the level of the receiver's maturity, generally gauges the level of appreciation the giver expects. The greatest gift ever given (Christ's sacrifice) and the greatest benefit ever received (eternal life in paradise) merit total appreciation. His gifts reaffirm his love and if those were given anonymously we would have no compass for knowing whom we should appreciate. Such anonymity would radically harm us. It is critical that we recognize God's love, gifts and sacrifice for us (1 Cor. 12:1f; Acts. 2:36, Jn. 3:16). Of course we are not God, but similarly, it would be harmful to your children to remain uninformed that their parents lovingly gave them generous gifts. Who would be so foolish as to send an engagement ring or a precious gift to their intended anonymously?

God wants even those who are in darkness to come out of it and to know and appreciate him (Mat. 4:16; 2 Pe. 3:9). But until then, they are generally left ignorant of God's graces and as such (Acts 17:30; Lk. 6:35), God is their *anonymous* or unrecognized benefactor, sustaining their existence (Heb. 1:3) until enlightenment, repentance and grace or otherwise judgment and justice come upon them (Rom. 2:4-9, 2 Pe. 2:12f).

When your spouse, children, or aging parents share details of their lives with you, it is likely they simply desire to share some things with you that are meaningful to them. **It is a gift of intimacy.** They may also be yearning for an affirmation of your love and respect, expressed through your appreciative response. Have you been wise enough to give it? If you don't know, ask them. – Ask them anyway.

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