

Striving for Obscurity

by [Chris Martin](#) | Mar 7, 2022

One of the early teachings that I was exposed to as a young man who was beginning to take his faith seriously was the benefit, and the need, for the man of God to “strive for obscurity.” After hearing this a few times, I felt compelled to dig into what I was being challenged to do. **What does “obscurity” mean? How do I Strive for it? When can I know that I am successful or have failed in this endeavor?**

First, I needed to get my arms around what it means to be “obscure.” A summary research of definitions yielded the following: “the state of being unknown, inconspicuous, unimportant,” another definition reads “relatively unknown,” and yet another reads “the state in which somebody/something is not well known or has been forgotten.” These definitions certainly were a help to me in my understanding; however, **this was not something that I was certain I wanted to pursue, let alone “strive” to be.**

To strive for something does not simply mean to focus on it or work towards it. It means **“to struggle or fight vigorously.” This means that one must expend a great amount of effort, determination, and diligence toward the goal of striving to be being unimportant, in the background, unseen, unknown, etc.**

In reality, I am ashamed to confess that this goes against every fiber of my flesh that screams “here I am!” or “Look at and notice me!” or “Tell me how great of a man I am!”

Jesus addresses this topic in Matthew 6:1-18 that we should give, pray, and fast in secret. At the heart of Jesus’ teaching in this passage is that **He will accept nothing except that which is done for Him and Him alone.**

Our motivation is of paramount importance. The WHY we do something is as important as the WHAT we do. Scriptures tell us that the Lord will “disclose the motives of men’s hearts.” This certainly is a challenge for us as ***we can never be certain that we have a pure motive.***

He also tells us in Jeremiah 17:9-10 “The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; Who can understand it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind.” If we will be judged by our motives, which we will, and if our heart is desperately wicked, which it is, ***we do well to examine our motives*** on an ongoing basis. **It is a vital tool** towards the end of **striving for obscurity.**

Seeking man’s approval is an addictive drug that we all do well to flee. Look for ways to not be noticed, do good when only our Heavenly Father will know of it. Be strategic about how we live our lives so that we can avoid man’s recognition as we cultivate a desire to only please and be noticed by our Heavenly Father.

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