

## Winning a medal in the Tokyo Olympics

What are your favorite summer Olympic sports?

How do you win a medal in Gymnastics or BMX Freestyle?

- Whose opinion matters?
- Whose opinion doesn't matter?

Today's question: How do you "win a medal" in life?

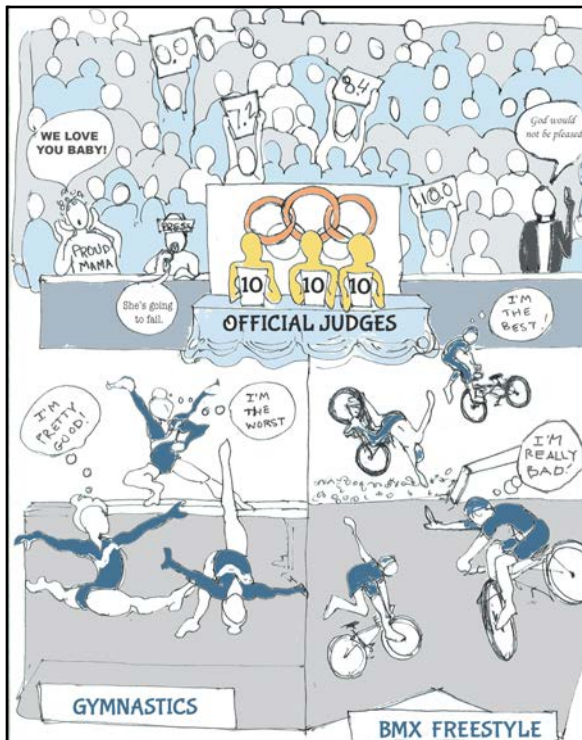
- Whose opinion matters?
- Whose opinion doesn't matter?

What did Jesus say and do?

Prayer: Give us wisdom to live life well



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## God Above All

*Luke 12:1-12*

[bib.ly/Lu12.NIV](https://bib.ly/Lu12.NIV)  
[tiny.cc/cmchandouts](https://tiny.cc/cmchandouts)

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*Luke***Be watching for...**

- Growing crowds were interested in and **divided** about Jesus
- Religious leaders (especially the Pharisees) **opposing** Him

**Luke chapter 11**

- Jesus drove out a demon. Then “some of the crowd said, ‘By Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons. Others tested him...’ ” (verse 15)
- “Jesus **knew their thoughts...**” [hidden opposition] (verse 17)
- “As the **crowds increased**, Jesus said, ‘**This is a wicked generation.**’ ” (verse 29)
- “...the Pharisees and the teachers of the law began to oppose him fiercely and to besiege him with questions, **waiting to catch him in something he might say.**” (v. 53-54)

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*Luke 12:1*

Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were **trampling on one another**, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples, saying: “Be on your guard against the **yeast** of the Pharisees, which is **hypocrisy**.”

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*Luke 12:1-12***1: Flee from hypocrisy (in self and in others)**

- Pharisees were **afraid of the crowds**
  - Later in Luke, the religious leaders “were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for **they were afraid of the people**. ... [Judas] watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them **when no crowd was present**.” *Luke 22:1-6*
- This led to ‘hypocrisy’: outside ≠ inside intentionally
- 2-3: • They were hiding their true agenda against Jesus
- 4-5: • Pretending to be learners (to avoid the crowd’s disapproval), they were actually trying to destroy Him
- 6-7:
- 8-10: • Jesus said: Don’t be **deceived** by hidden opponents of Jesus
- 11-12: • Don’t **follow** their model

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*Luke 12:2-3*

[Jesus continued]:

“There is nothing **concealed**  
that will not be **disclosed**,  
or **hidden**  
that will not be **made known**.

What you have said in the **dark**  
will be **heard in the daylight**,  
and what you have **whispered** in the ear in the **inner rooms**  
will be **proclaimed from the roofs**.

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*Luke 12:1-12*

1: Flee from hypocrisy (in self and in others)

**2-3: Everything will eventually be revealed**

- Hiding may work with people...for a while
- Nothing is hidden from God → He knows our hearts
- And God will eventually reveal everything
  - Both good and bad things
  - Not just texts and emails and private conversations
  - Our hearts!

4-5: • If this doesn't make us uncomfortable, I'm not sure what will!

6-7: • As tempting as hiding our hearts can be (hypocrisy)

8-10: Jesus said that it is guaranteed to fail!

11-12:

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*Luke 12:4-5*

“I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom **you should fear: Fear him** who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, **fear him.**

**Whatever has a powerful influence over your life**

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**Luke 12:1-12**

1: Flee from hypocrisy (in self and in others)

2-3: Everything will eventually be revealed

4-5: **“Fear” God (really!). And fear nothing and no one else**

- Pharisees ‘feared’ the people rather than God
  - Deeply influenced by people’s opinions and reactions
  - Either seeking approval or avoiding opposition
  - Leads to hypocrisy = selective hiding > *playing a game*
- Instead, we should ‘fear’ God
  - Jesus taught: hell is real and dreadful!

6-7: • Only God has authority to send to hell

8-10: • So God’s opinion is the only one that really matters!

11-12: • And it *\*really\** matters!

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**Luke 12:6-7**

“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

**When God remembers, He actively brings good**

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***Luke 12:1-12***

1: Flee from hypocrisy (in self and in others)

2-3: Everything will eventually be revealed

4-5: “Fear” God (really!). And fear nothing and no one else

**6-7: If God is for you, don't be afraid of anything**

- God ‘remembers’ even our most insignificant parts
- If **God is for us**, nothing else can truly harm us
- If **God judges us**, nothing else can help

8-10:

11-12:

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***by word and by life*** ← ***Luke 12:8-10***

“I tell you, whoever publicly **acknowledges** me before others, the Son of Man will also acknowledge before the angels of God. But whoever **disowns** me before others will be disowned before the angels of God. And everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who **blasphemes against the Holy Spirit** will not be forgiven.

**Pharisees had privately said:  
Jesus' power is from Satan**

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*Luke 12:1-12*

1: Flee from hypocrisy (in self and in others)

2-3: Everything will eventually be revealed

4-5: “Fear” God (really!). And fear nothing and no one else

6-7: If God is for you, don’t be afraid of anything else

**8-10: Our fate hinges on our response to Jesus and the Spirit**

- Jesus’ claim: everything hinges on our relationship with Him
- Amazing hope! Jesus claiming us as His family
- Or great trouble: The “unforgivable sin”
  - One cannot simultaneously accuse Jesus of being empowered by evil and be forgiven by Jesus

11-12: • **This was the heart of the religious leaders**

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*Luke 12:11-12*

“When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say.”

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***Luke 12:1-12***

1: Flee from hypocrisy (in self and in others)

2-3: Everything will eventually be revealed

4-5: “Fear” God (really!). And fear nothing and no one else

6-7: If God is for you, don’t be afraid of anything else

8-10 Our fate hinges on our response to Jesus and the Spirit

**11-12: The Holy Spirit gives us the power to fear God first**

- Holy Spirit is not merely a source of information
  - “What words should I say?”
- He is the ability to stay faithful to God even when all other powers try to force us to leave Him
- Martyrs: followed Jesus even to death

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**Fear**

**Fear = whatever has the biggest influence in our lives**

- Our parents (even when they are gone...)
- Our spouse or partner or friends
- Our critics (even when they are gone...)
- Authorities: boss, government, religious figures, ...
- The “wisdom” of the crowds (likes, followers, peer reviews, ...)
- Success: publications, grants, awards, raises, promotions, ...
- Our internal compass
- Our heart: pleasures, pride, hurts, ...
- Money

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## Fear

**Fear = whatever has the biggest influence in our lives**

- **So often, our fears are contradictory**
  - **Parents and spouse/friends**
  - **Our critics and our internal compass**
- **So often, our fears are impossible to satisfy**
  - **They keep changing, or they keep critiquing**
- **They do not have the power we think they have**
  - **Example: the satisfaction of praise is incredibly short lived!**
- **None are any help to us once we die**

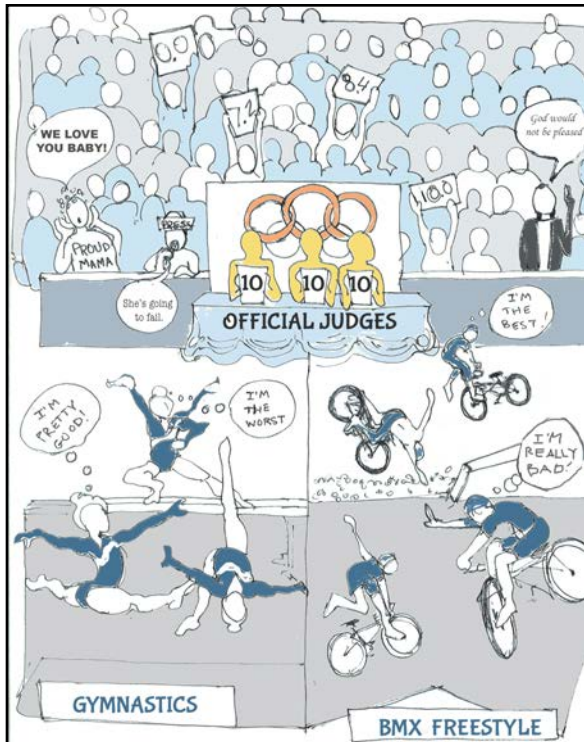
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Jesus taught...

**The only true path  
for a hope-filled life  
leading to a glory-filled and unfading future  
is to fear God above all else**

- **being guided by His character and commands**
- **being concerned about His opinion above all others**
- **with worshipful, joyful, and obedient awe**

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Who has opinions about how well you are living your life?

Whose opinions are most important?

Whose opinions are most influential in your life today?

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Jesus taught...

**The only true path  
for a hope-filled life  
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## Application

### Fear God alone

- **Everyone** has “gods”: whatever has the biggest influence
- Can those gods handle the burden we are putting on him or her or it?
  - It is **unfair, unwise, and unkind** to put that burden on any person!
  - It is **so foolish** to trust any human institution or group
  - It is **so foolish** to trust the approval of crowds
  - It is **so foolish** to trust our own hearts

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## Application

### Fear God alone

- **Jesus' claim:**
  - There is one God and we can know Him
    - Jesus said: “**If you really know me, you will know my Father as well.** From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” *John 14:7*
  - Jesus is the only way to know Him
    - Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life.  
**No one comes to the Father except through me.**” *John 14:6*
  - God holds our eternal destiny in His hands
  - God is amazingly loving and caring...knowing our hair count!!
  - God is to be feared above all else with joy
  - The Spirit of God gives us the power to fear Him above all else

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### Application

#### **Fear God alone**

- **Live with the deep realization that...**
  - **God's perspective matters far more than anything else**
  - **God's love is better than anything else**
  - **God gives His Spirit so that He lives in those who fear God**
- **This leads to...**
  - **worshipful, joyful, and obedient awe**
  - **being guided by His character and commands**
  - **being concerned about His opinion above all others**
- **The best way to stop 'fearing' lesser things is...**
  - **To fear God more**

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### Application

#### **Fear God alone**

- **Yet we are conditioned for exactly the wrong thing...**
  - **We live in a world of public review of everything and everyone**
- **We must re-condition ourselves to value God's perspective above all else**
  - **Our conscience is an imperfect yet useful **starting point****
  - **God's perspective is usually much quieter than other voices**
    - **for now...**
  - **So we **have to choose to listen...****

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## Application

### **Fear God alone**

- **Case studies**
  - **Being a preacher and a pastor**
    - **Choose to evaluate my sermon by God's perspective before anyone else can say anything**
    - **And after... (both praise and critique...)**
  - **Doing what Jesus says**
    - **Be generous rather than loving money or time**
    - **Forgive rather than being bitter**
  - **Seeking to know Jesus**
    - **Sometimes we let other people control whether we seek Him (we fear them more than Jesus...)**

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Jesus taught...

**The only true path  
for a hope-filled life  
leading to a glory-filled and unfading future  
is to fear God above all else**

**This is what Jesus did!**

- **He refused to be controlled by people (powerful or not)**
- **He refused to be controlled by pain and suffering**
- **He refused to be controlled by self preservation**

**In contrast: Peter denied even knowing Jesus!**

**Jesus invited Peter to fear God again, and Jesus forgave him**

- **To fear God is also to turn to Him for mercy when we fail**

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