

# Thursday Devotional

June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021

*“16 And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.” – Matthew 6:16-18*

Have you ever fasted? In our culture today, intermittent fasting is a fad and a “new”, or maybe just rejuvenated, method for losing weight. This is not the fasting that Jesus is talking about in this passage. Fasting in the context of this passage is very connected to the verses building up to this passage. Fasting is when we spend special time praying in place of eating a meal. For example, I normally eat at noon every day. If I was too fast, I would spend that time that I would normally eat in prayer to God. Fasting is normally done for especially hard situations or times of need. The point is that instead of being dependent upon food for that meal, we are being dependent upon God. We are spending that time instead of feeding and nourishing our physical bodies, we are spending time feeding our spiritual souls by spending time with God in prayer.

What Jesus is emphasizing here is that fasting is to be a matter of the heart between the Christian and between God. Similar to prayer, fasting had become a ritual and a practice of saying, “hey look at me! I am being extra spiritual because I am fasting.” Jesus is correcting this view and says that our practice of fasting should never be for those around us, but for God our father. He then will reward us. This reward is more often than not a peace of mind and conscience in God’s will for our lives.

I could definitely use some intermittent fasting. As I look at this passage, I believe we could all use some fasting and prayer even more. Look at the language of verse 16, “when you fast.” Jesus is not saying “if” you fast, but “when”, almost with an expectation that fasting will happen. When was the last time you fasted and spent that time in prayer, feeding your spiritual soul? Really fasting is a sign of dependence upon God. Are you being dependent upon God? Fasting is a great way to jump start and remind yourself of our utter dependence upon God our Father. Fasting is a sign of our humility before God. Fasting is a reminder to return to God. Let us remember who we are serving, and that God is the creator, and we are His creature.

For further study: Ezra 8:21-23; Proverbs 3:5-6; Acts 13:3