

## Fasting Glorifies God 2018-09-02

### Matthew 6:16-18

*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. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 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.*

C-Pap story.....we all naturally act in ways toward self-preservation and personal comfort...lie protect rep, pursue ease in life, fight for air.

- So why we would willingly deny ourselves one of life's necessities...food? Last Sunday Ryan said: "Fall into lie that food, drink, sports, kids, significant others, wealth, jobs, leisure, etc satisfy more than Jesus."

- We desire physical bread more than we desire Jesus...bread of life. John 6:35
  - Fasting is a way to express and grow in belief that Jesus is enough. That He alone can satisfy and sustain us.

Fasting at its heart is an intensification of prayer.

- deliberately deny desires/personal appetites for specific time and take time spent doing them to focus attention on God in prayer/Word.
  - Subduing the flesh to the spirit by abstaining from all food and drink, (except water)...now may include TV/media/internet.
    - Hebrew = "to cover the mouth", Greek = "to abstain"

Not a sin if *seen fasting* but sin if *fasting to be seen*. Matthew 6:16-18a

- Easy to do religious things if others are watching—
  - Horizontal effect not all bad...like kids see you pray, worship, etc
    - Displaying desperate need for sovereign God to act.

SAFE fasting has many physical benefits to body.

- Impurities removed thus clearing mind and healing body.
  - Automatically lose appetite when sickness strikes.

Christian primarily fasts for spiritual purposes that include:

- Freedom from sin/bondage for self/others. Isaiah 58:6, Mark 9:29
  - Unbeliever saved, relationship reconciled, victory over sin/temp
    - When I fast I see how much/easily my flesh controls me.
      - Can reveal bondage (food, TV, sports, etc.)
  - Spurgeon: abstain from your "freedom" to break bondage in another. 1 Corinthians 6:12-13
- Guidance: Generally hear Lord's voice more easily while fasting. Acts 13:2-3, Daniel 9:3, Isaiah 58:11a
- Spiritual strength/holiness, prep for challenges. Matthew 4:1-2
  - Missions trip. Jesus fasted to begin His earthly ministry.

Like prayer, goal is not to manipulate God but ^faith/trust/fellowship w/God.  
Isaiah 58:3-4, Matthew 6:18b, Hebrews 11:6,

- But expect God reward those who diligently seek Him. Not earned/merited.
  - benefits may come years later or in way can't perceive.
    - True "reward" =^intimacy with Jesus Christ.

Fasting can glorify God.

- It tangibly says, "I empty, you full. I hungry, you Bread of Life. I weak, you strong. I poor, you rich. I foolish, you wise. I broken, you whole."
  - Fasting expresses the cry of our heart that nothing on earth can satisfy my soul like Jesus.