



Matthew 6:1

We must be sure that whatever we do, we do for the **glory** of God because if we do these acts of righteousness to be seen by men, they are no longer acts of **righteousness**.

Matthew 6:16-18

Jesus is not teaching here on **whether** we should fast or not. He is assuming we **will** fast and teaching us how to do it and especially how not to do it.

Fasting biblically:

- Is abstaining from food for the increase of **spiritual** activity.
- Is not as much about the abstaining from food as the feasting on **God**.
- Is not an action that **manipulates** God into doing something for you. Any response God gives, no matter what you are doing for him, is an act of **grace**.
- Is one of many spiritual disciplines that are **authenticated** by our daily faith lived before the Lord.

The danger of **hypocrisy** is that it is so successful. It aims at the praise of men and it succeeds – but that's all.

The two dangers these people fell into when it came to fasting were seeking the wrong **reward** (the esteem of others) and then hiding that with the **pretense** of a love for God.

Do what you can so that no one will be **drawn** to the fact unnecessarily that you are fasting. Jesus says when you do it the right way, when you fast for the glory of God, then there is reward in that.

If someone finds out you are fasting, you haven't sinned. **Being** seen fasting and fasting **to be** seen are not the same. Being seen fasting is just an external event. Fasting to be seen is a self-exalting motive of the heart.

The best thing to do in that situation is to ask God to protect you from the **false** joy of people knowing that you're seeking Him. Protect you from pride.

Not only do we do what we can to not be seen by **men** in fasting, he says you do what you do in order to be seen by your Father. We fast in order to be with **God** in secret and in doing so, God rewards us.

Examples:

- *1 Samuel 7:* There are times when fasting is something you do so that God can bring **repentance** to your heart and reward you with that.
- *Exodus 34:* There are times when you need to understand what God is really about and what his character means in your life, so you fast so God can reveal **himself** to you.
- *Acts 13:* There are times when we fast because we need God to speak to us and bring **clarity** to where we are in our lives.
- There are multiple reasons and possible rewards.

When you fast and pray, God can reward you with **answers** to your prayers, but that's not the reward that Jesus is talking about. There is one certain reward when you fast how Jesus is instructing: that certain reward is **God** himself.

Esther 4:15-16

Fasting can accentuate your **prayers**. In this case, the fasting was about changing the heart of the king.

We need to understand that **biblical** priorities are more important than party loyalties and that we pray for and vote for men or women in public office who stand for what we **believe** under Jesus Christ.

Jesus didn't ever say anything he didn't mean. He says "**when** you fast." And he promises when we fast in righteousness, God **rewards** us – in more ways than we can count – but always with himself.