

- Matthew 6:16-18

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- Fasting?
 - Abstaining from Food for a period of time.
 - unusual or exceptional
 - a special purpose

Fasting?

Five Values of Fasting

— William Barclay

- 1. Self-discipline**
- 2. Release from slavery to habit**
- 3. Preservation of ability to do without things**
- 4. Health**
- 5. Enhancement of our appreciation of things**

- Five Values of Fasting - Barclay
 - Self discipline
 - Release from slavery to habit
 - Preservation of ability to do without things
 - Health
 - Enhancement of our appreciation of things.

Fasting?

Old Testament Survey of Fasting

1. Mourning and Confessing Sin

(1 Samuel 7:3-6; 1 Kings 21:27; Ezra 9:1-6;
Nehemiah 9:1-2; Esther 9:25-32;
Jeremiah 14:10-12; Daniel 9:3;
Joel 1:13-14; 2:12-17;
Jonah 3:4-5)

- 1. Mourning and Confessing Sin
 - (1 Samuel 7:3-6; 1 Kings 21:27; Ezra 9:1-6; Nehemiah 9:1-2; Esther 9:25-32; Jeremiah 14:10-12; Daniel 9:3; Joel 1:13-14; 2:12-17; Jonah 3:4-5)



- 2. Illness
 - (2 Samuel 12:15-17; 20-23; Psalm 35:13-14)

Fasting?

Old Testament Survey of Fasting

3. Seek Help

**(2 Chronicles 20:1-4; Ezra 8:21-23; Nehemiah 1:3-4;
Esther 4:3, 15-16; Psalm 69:10-11; 109:24;
Daniel 6:18)**

- Seek Help
 - (2 Chronicles 20:1-4; Ezra 8:21-23; Nehemiah 1:3-4; Esther 4:3, 15-16; Psalm 69:10-11; 109:24; Daniel 6:18)

Fasting?

Old Testament Survey of Fasting

- 1. Mourning and Confessing Sin**
- 2. Illness**
- 3. Seek Help**

- OT Survey
 - Mourning and Confessing Sin
 - Illness
 - Seek Help

Fasting?

Old Testament Survey of Fasting

- 1. Mourning and Confessing Sin**
- 2. Illness**
- 3. Seek Help**

- New Testament
 - Jesus in Wilderness (40 days and nights): seek help
 - Anna: worshiping with fasting and prayer
 - Pharisee: twice a week
 - Church in Antioch: send out Barnabas and Saul: Seek help
 - Paul and Barnabas: committing elders/believers/churches to the Lord: seek help
 - Day of Atonement: called “the Fast”: sin (still Jewish)



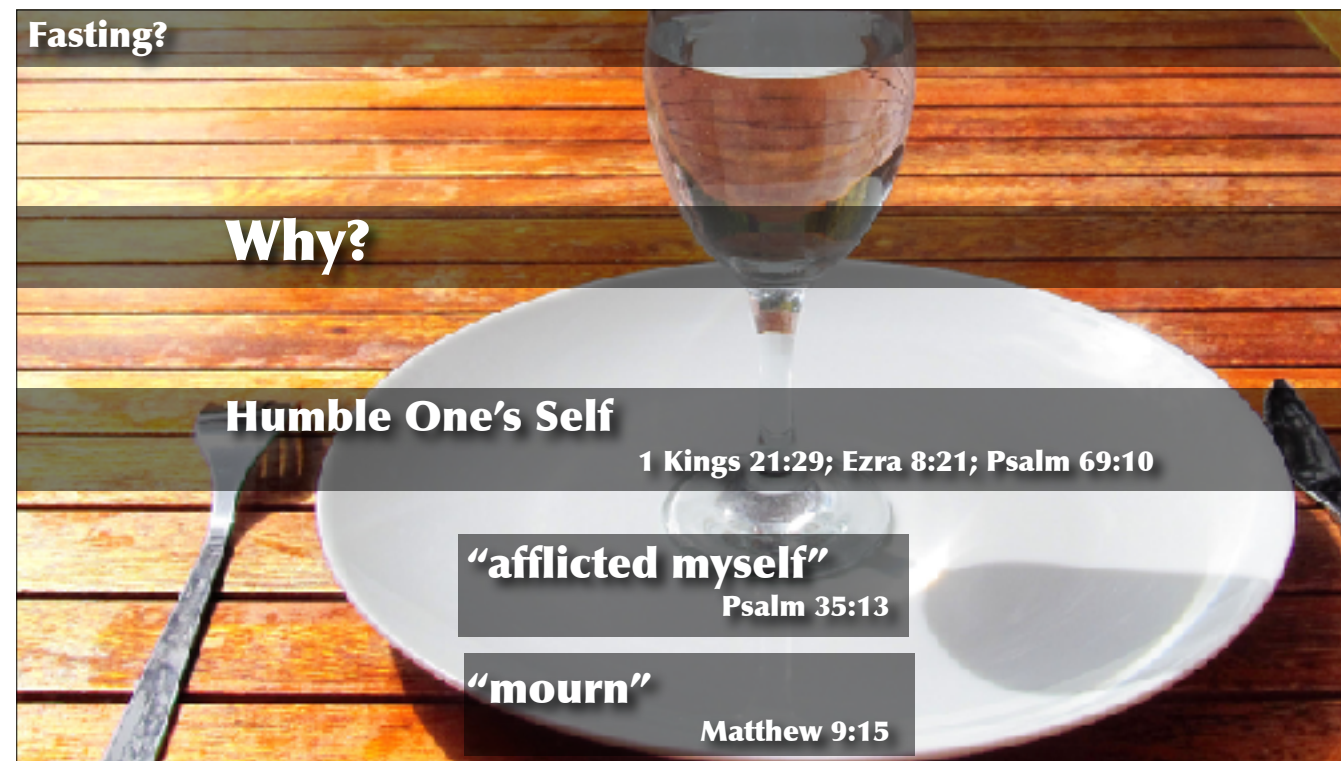
- Why fasting?
 - It is never explicitly commanded.
 - Even if not commanded, it must be done with sincerity and purpose.
 - See later, our Father is not interested in ritualistic worship.



- Humble
 - 1 Kings 21:29: Have you seen how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me (tore clothes, sackcloth, fasted, dejected)
 - Ezra 8:21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods.
 - Psalms 69:10 (ESV Strong's) 10 When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach.



- Self-affliction
 - Psalms 35:13-14 (ESV) 13 But I, when they were sick—I wore sackcloth; I afflicted myself with fasting; I prayed with head bowed on my chest. 14 I went about as though I grieved for my friend or my brother; as one who laments his mother, I bowed down in mourning.



- mourning
 - Matthew 9:14-17 (ESV) 14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” 15 And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.



- Seeking Jehovah:
 - Daniel 9:3 (ESV) 3 Then I turned my face to the Lord God, seeking him by prayer and pleas for mercy with fasting and sackcloth and ashes.
 - 2 Chronicles 20:3 Then Jehoshaphat was afraid and set his face to seek the Lord, and proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah.
 - Ezra 8:21 Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river Ahava, that we might humble ourselves before our God, to seek from him a safe journey for ourselves, our children, and all our goods.



- Be Heard by God
 - Jeremiah 14:12: Though they fast, I will not hear their cry,
 - Joel 1:14: Consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the elders and all the inhabitants of the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.



- Jehovah Gracious
 - 2 Samuel 12:22-23 “While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept, for I said, Who knows whether Jehovah will be gracious to me, that the child may live?’
23 But now he is dead. Why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.”



- Fasting
 - Seeking God's help,
 - usually because something has gone wrong: illness, death, sin
 - or it seems to be a desperate situation
 - Humble myself so He will hear my plea for his grace and help



- What is fasting really about?
 - Not Self discipline, habits, doing without, health, or appreciation.
 - I'm approaching my Father in dire need of His help.
 - But I know that my Father is the almighty God and I've done things displeasing to Him.



- What right do I have to come before Him?
 - Why do I come to him?
 - Cannot do it on my own, lack the power, or knowledge or both.
 - Only He can provide help I really need.



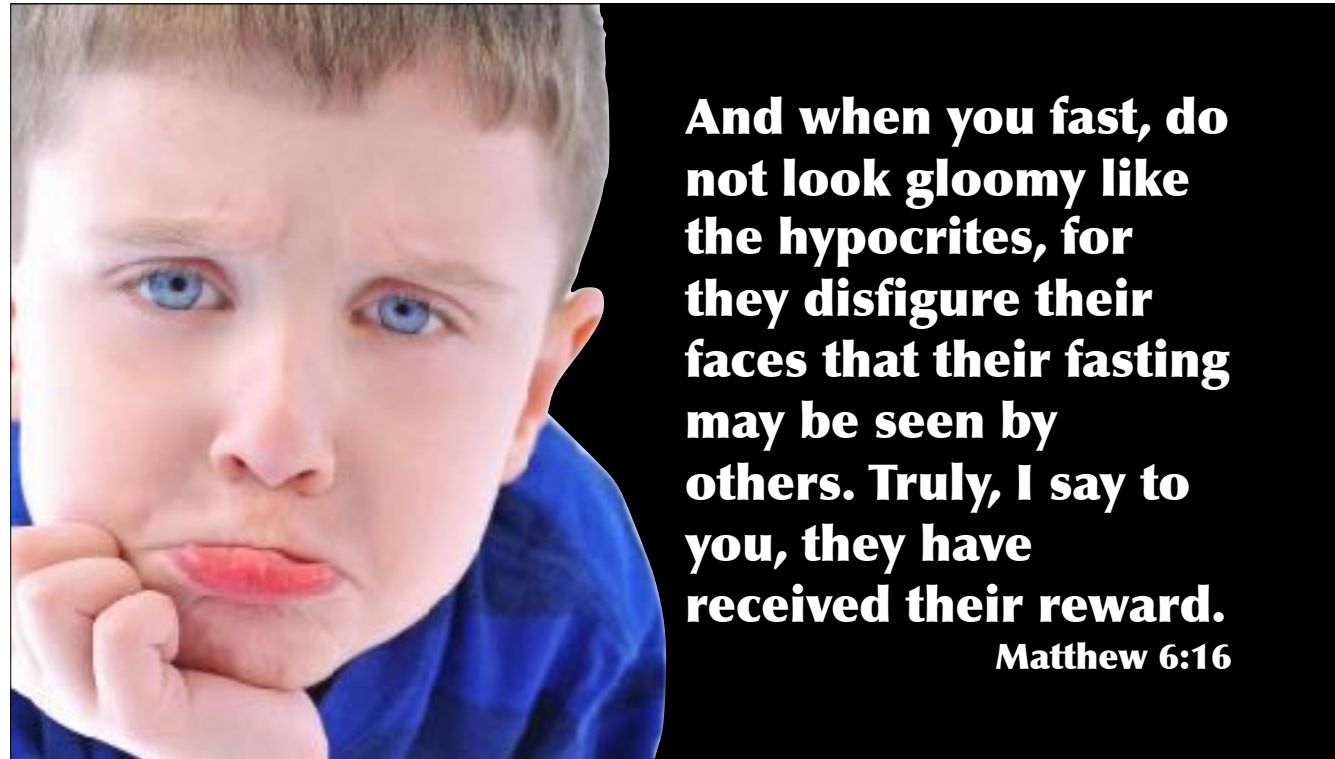
- Micah 6:6-8: Micah 6:6-8 (ESV) 6 “With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” 8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?



- How do I demonstrate humility?
 - How do I demonstrate the depth of both my need and sincerity?
 - When I fast, I give up something necessary to my life.
 - Perhaps it demonstrates that nothing at that moment is more important than having God hear me and help me.
 - Both physically and spiritually I am completely focused on Him.



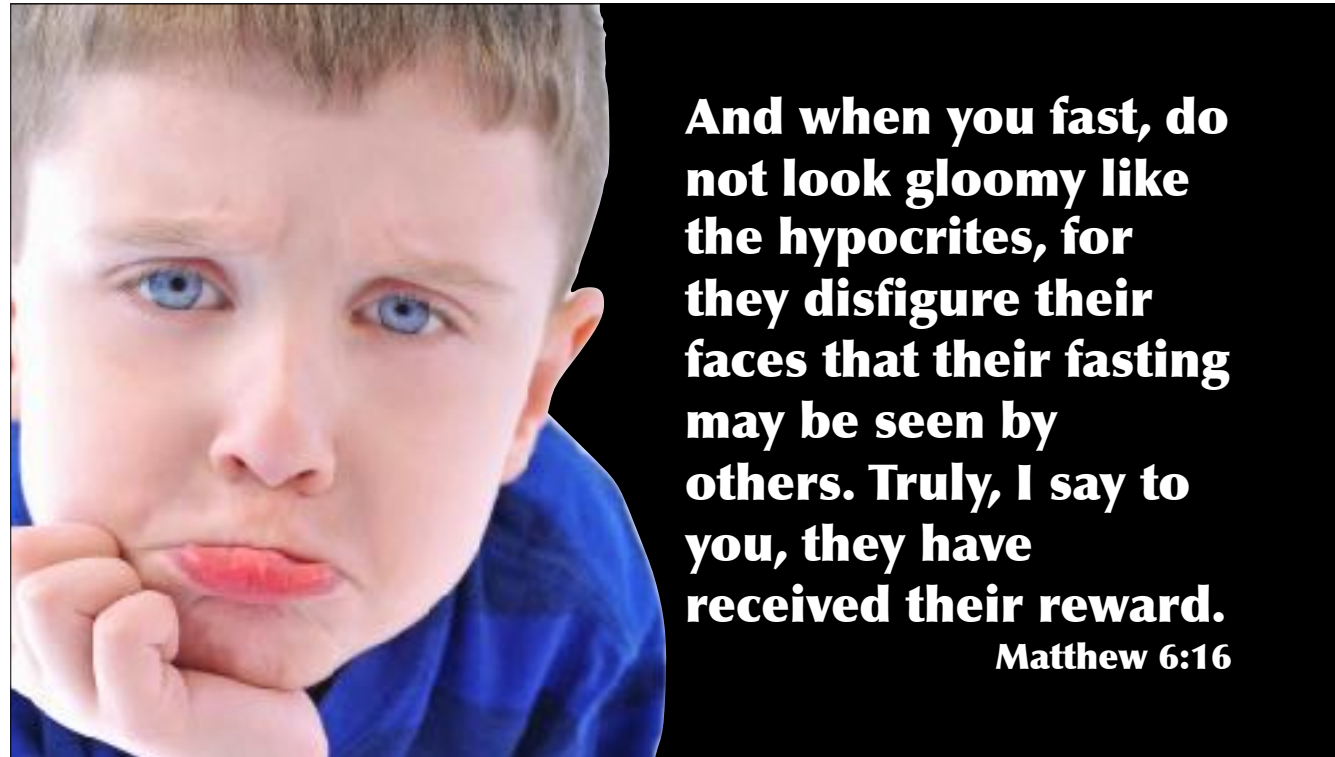
- Need God's help
 - demonstrate that I am utterly dependent on God as my GRACIOUS HELPER.
 - Sin
 - Mourning
 - Difficulties



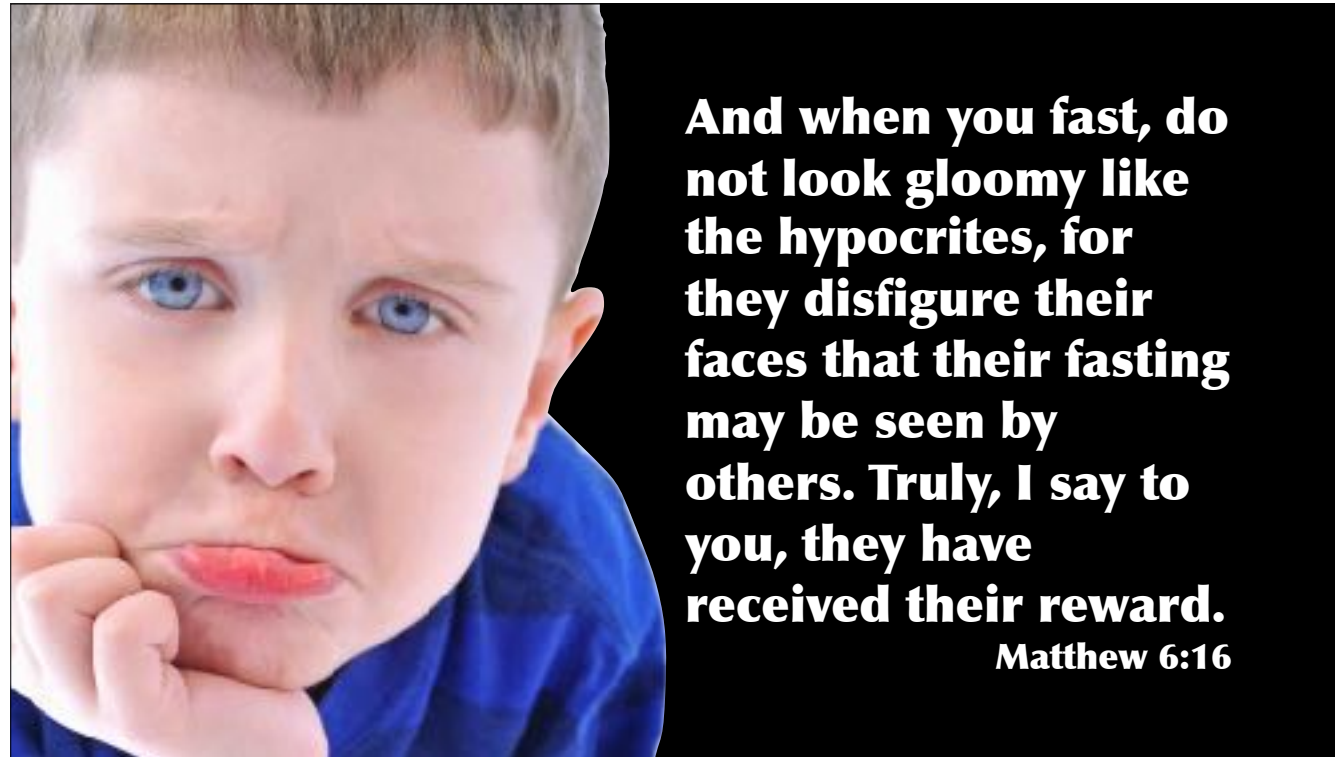
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Matthew 6:16

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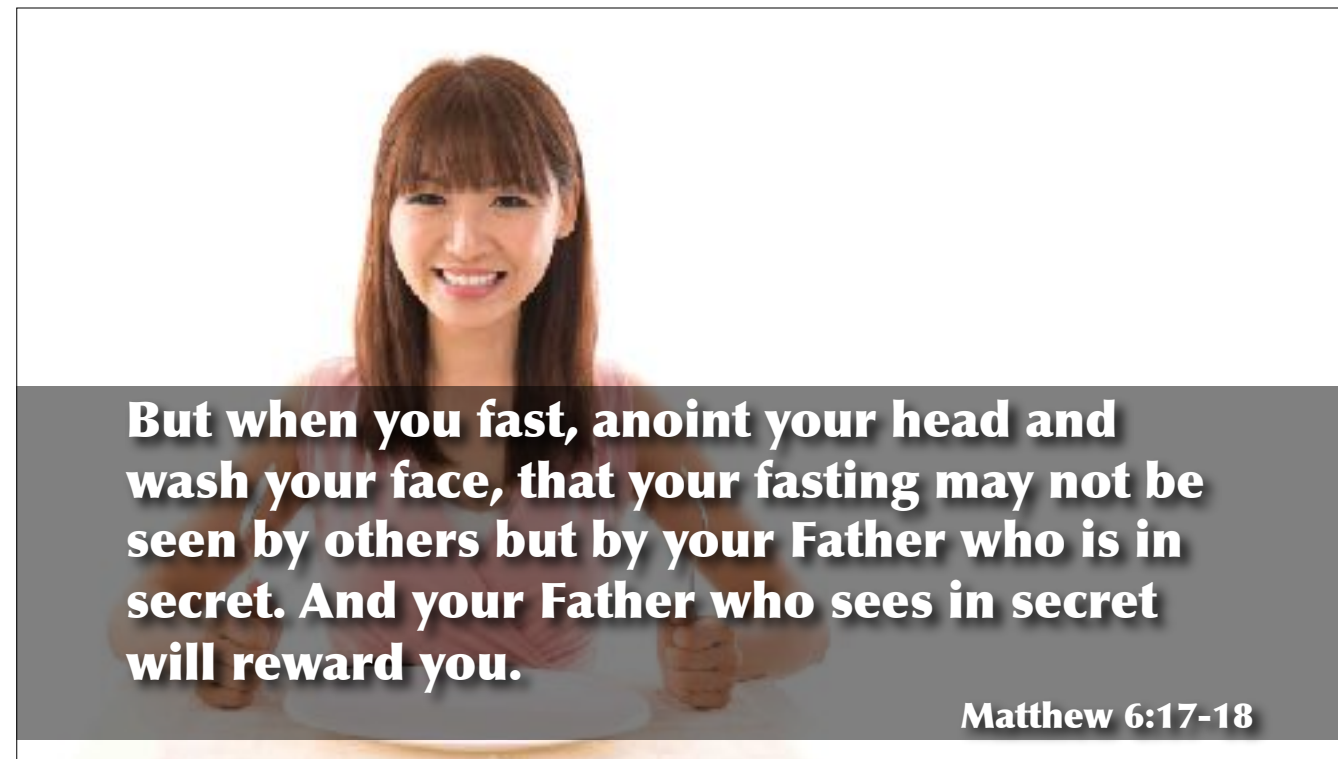
- So how did the S&P practice fasting as righteousness?
 - Seems to have been primarily ritual.
 - Luke 18:12: I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'
 - Does this practice fit with what we see in the OT? Not even close



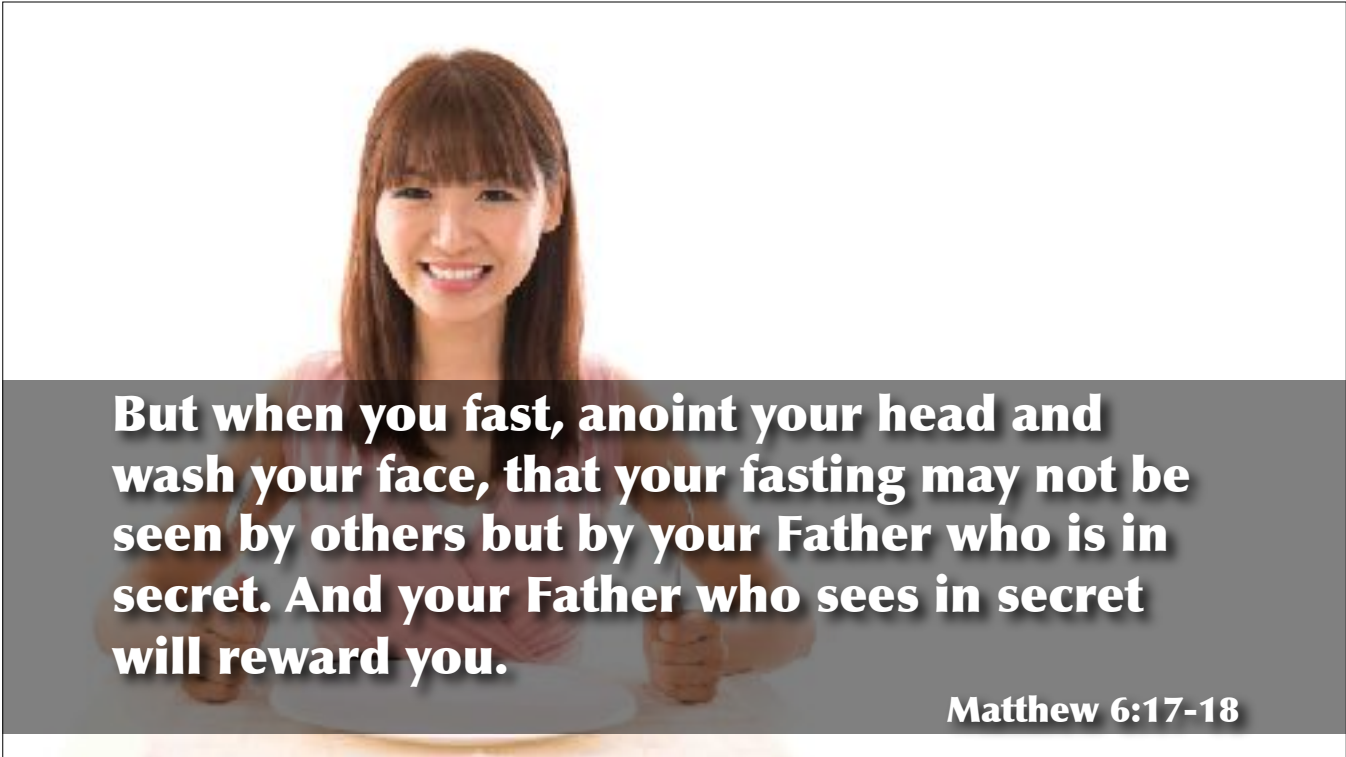
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Matthew 6:16

- Gloomy Hypocrites
 - Call attention to the fact that they are afflicting themselves.
 - Disfigure faces: so you couldn't miss it!
 - "He must be a very spiritual person; sacrificing for God."
- But their focus was not on God, but themselves.
 - And they received the glory of men
 - But men do not know their heart.



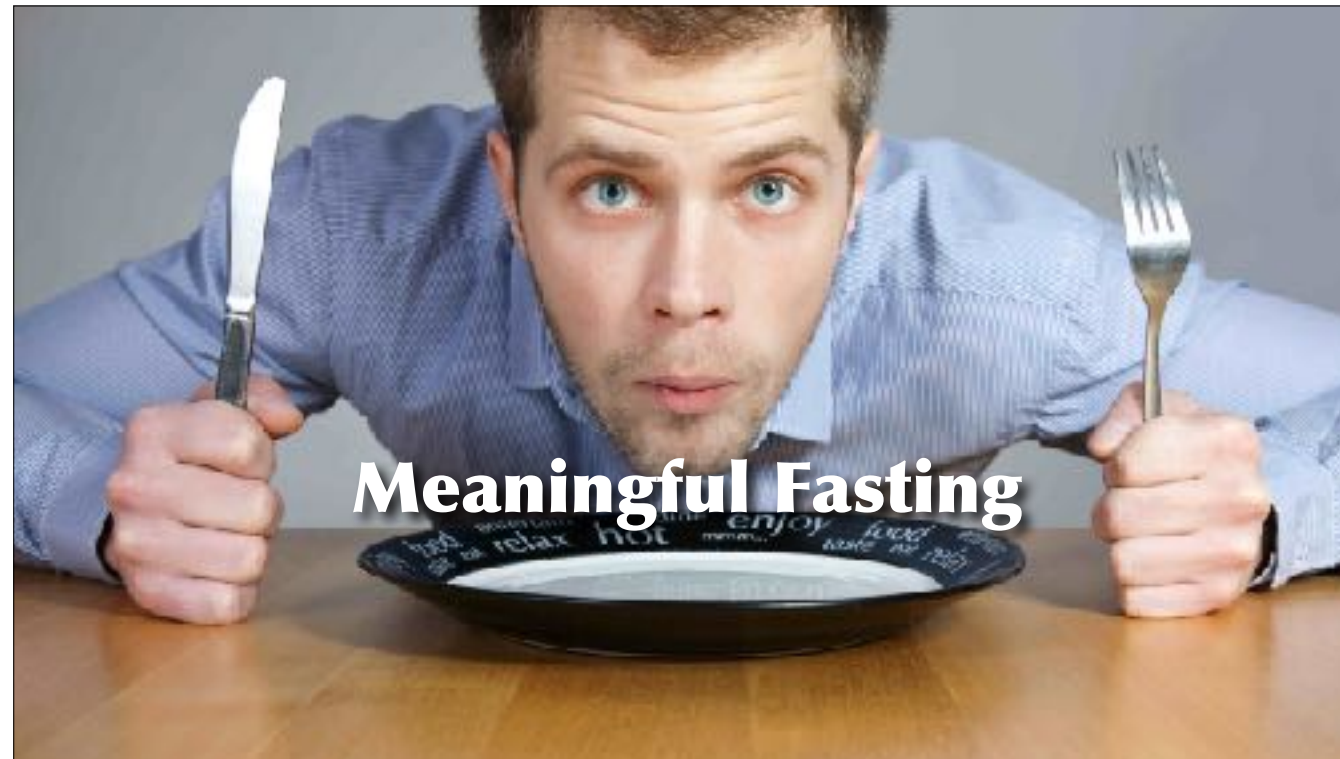
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Matthew 6:17-18

- The Right Way of Fasting
 - nothing exceptional about washing the face and anointing the hair.
 - That was the normal, usual procedure.
 - “When you fast, be natural.”
 - Not seen of men to fast
 - Reward from Father!



- What does God see as the meaningful way to fast?
- Isaiah 58:1-2



- 3 Why have we fasted, and you see it not? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you take no knowledge of it?' Behold, in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure, and oppress all your workers. 4 Behold, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to hit with a wicked fist. Fasting like yours this day will not make your voice to be heard on high.
- Seek your own pleasure; Oppress all your workers; Quarrel, fight, hit



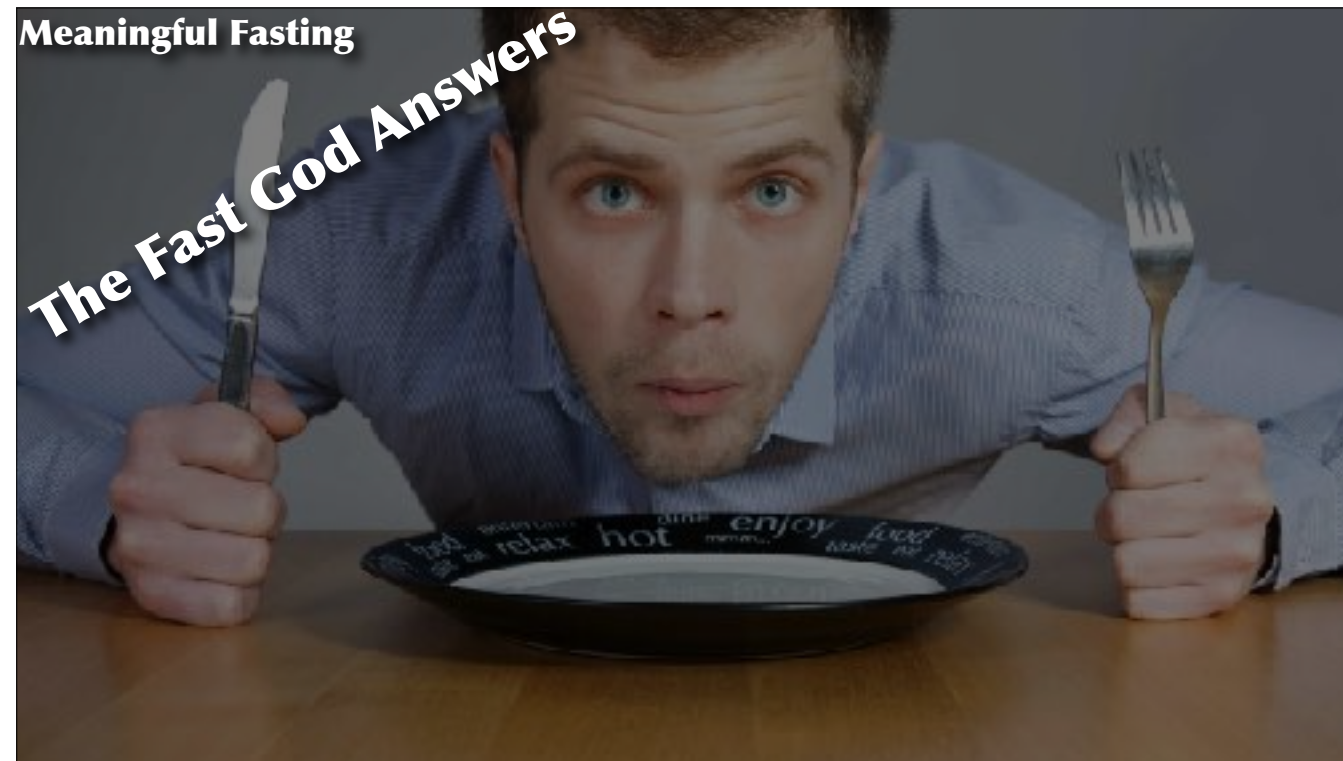
- 6 “Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the straps of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? 7 Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh?”

Meaningful Fasting

The Fast God Chooses

**Loose the bonds of wickedness
Undo the straps of the yoke
Let the oppressed go free
Break every yoke
Share bread with hungry
Bring homeless into your house
Cloth naked, and not hide**

- Loose the bonds of wickedness
- Undo the straps of the yoke
- Let the oppressed go free
- Break every yoke
- Share Bread with hungry
- Bring homeless poor into your house
- Cloth naked, don't hide yourself



- 9 Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, 10 if you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday.

Meaningful Fasting

The Fast God Answers

Take away the yoke

Take away the pointing of the finger

Take away speaking wickedness

Pour yourself out for the hungry

Satisfy the desire of the afflicted

- Take away the yoke
- Take away the pointing of the finger
- Take away speaking wickedness
- Pour yourself out for the hungry
- Satisfy the desire of the afflicted

Meaningful Fasting

Righteousness!

Graciously helping those in need

Graciously forgiving those in sin

- To God,
 - Fasting is NOT about going without food.
 - Fasting IS about living righteously before God and Man
 - Graciously forgiving those in sin
 - Graciously helping those in need
- When you fast, you must be gracious to those in need; just as you are seeking God's gracious help in your need

Meaningful Fasting

God's Answer



- 8 Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily; your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.
- 10 then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday. 11 And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. 12 And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to dwell in.

Meaningful Fasting

God's Answer

Light

Speedy Healing

Righteousness before

Glory of Jehovah rear guard

Satisfy the desire of the afflicted

- Light
- Speedy healing
- Righteousness before
- Glory of Jehovah rear guard
- Satisfy the desire of the afflicted



- When you fast, you must be gracious to those in need; just as you are seeking God's gracious help in your need

**We implore you on
behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.**

2 Corinthians 5:20

Let all that you do be done in love.

1 Corinthians 16:14



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The Fast That I Choose

Matthew 6:16-18

Synopsis: Jesus' final example of practical righteousness is about fasting righteously. Fasting is not really about food, but about humbling myself before God, seeking the gracious help of my Father. The fasting that God chooses is not about going without food, but about righteously and graciously helping others in their time of need and being glad to aid them.

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"Let all that you do be done with love."