

FASTING BEFORE THE FACE OF GOD  
*Matthew 6:16-18 // July 2, 2023 PM*

- I. True fasting is a willful abstaining from food *for the sake of praying and giving*.
- II. True fasting is a willful abstaining from food *by kingdom disciples*.
- III. True fasting is a willful abstaining from food *as an expression of Godward agony and appetite*.

QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY WORSHIP

1. What is fasting? Is it possible to fast from other things besides food?
2. How does Jesus's teaching on fasting relate to His prior teaching on praying and giving? Why does fasting come last?
3. Why doesn't Jesus say, "If you fast..."? Does He assume that His followers will fast (cf. Mk. 2:18-22)?
4. What sets apart Christian fasting from every other kind of fasting?
5. What kind of heart is sincere fasting driven by?
6. In discouraging hypocrisy, isn't Jesus encouraging it when He tells us to not have an outwardly gloomy appearance as we fast? Would this not be putting on a false external that doesn't accord with the mournful spirit from which fasting flows?

QUESTIONS FOR PRIVATE REFLECTION

1. Is fasting a regular part of my spiritual walk? Why, or why not?
2. What sinful motivation am I most tempted toward when it comes to fasting? What is a fitting Bible passage to counter it?
3. How could I grow in the discipline of fasting? And why should I want to grow in it?