

# God's Word on Fasting

Matthew 6:16-18

## Introduction:

### ●Fasting

1. Some people are required to fast for \_\_\_\_\_ hours to get accurate results from blood tests.
2. Some Christians believe that fasting should be a s\_\_\_\_\_ discipline.
3. Jesus saw that fasting was done by many Jews in h\_\_\_\_\_ (they just put on an act).

### ●What does God say about fasting?

## What is biblical fasting?

### ●The general definition of fasting is going without f\_\_\_\_\_

1. For many, this is involuntary – people being d\_\_\_\_\_ of food.
2. For others, this may be v\_\_\_\_\_.

### ●The biblical definition (i.e., what God accepts as spiritually beneficial).

1. Jesus did not define fasting in His sermon, but condemned fasting that was done to be s\_\_\_\_\_ by others (Matt 6:16).
2. We have only one recorded instance where Jesus fasted (Matthew 4; Luke 4).

a. Jesus fasted \_\_\_\_\_ days and nights.

b. When did Jesus experience hunger?

- 1) Most translations state that a\_\_\_\_\_ the forty days and nights of fasting, He hungered. (After running a marathon, I hungered also, but that does not mean that I was not hungry during the run).
- 2) The NAS reads that after fasting forty days and nights, He t\_\_\_\_\_ became hungry (see this same Greek word in Matt 21:29,32; Heb 12:11). – this word was not translated by many versions and shows that the hunger did not start until a\_\_\_\_\_ the fasting session ended.

c. The fast involved intense p\_\_\_\_\_ (whenever Jesus withdrew from people, He did it to spend undistracted time in prayer).

3. Putting this altogether, biblical fasting is prayer that is so intense that you skip eating because you aren't h\_\_\_\_\_.

### When is fasting biblical?

- Matt 6:16-18 exposes how people showed that they were fasting
  1. They put on a g\_\_\_\_\_ face.
  2. They n\_\_\_\_\_ their appearance.
- God never commanded fasting as a spiritual discipline
  1. In Lev 16:29, God commanded people to h\_\_\_\_\_ (or afflict) their souls once per year on the Day of Atonement.
    - a. This was interpreted by the Jewish Rabbis as f\_\_\_\_\_
    - b. Is 58:3 gives fasting as the way the people c\_\_\_\_\_ to humble themselves.
    - c. However, you can humble yourself before God by p\_\_\_\_\_ alone (1 Pet 5:6,7).
  2. Jesus fasted for 40 days and nights because the circumstance called for it.
    - a. Remember, Jesus only knew what the Father revealed (He did not know when He would return – Matt 24:36)
      - 1) He did and said only what the Father did and told Him to say (Jn 5:19; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10)
      - 2) He increased in w\_\_\_\_\_ (Lk 2:52)
      - 3) He learned o\_\_\_\_\_ (Heb 5:8).
    - b. Just prior to the fast God spoke at Jesus's baptism, quoting two Scriptures.
      - 1) *You are My Son* (comes from Ps 2:7 and refers to the M\_\_\_\_\_)- Jesus already knew this from childhood.
      - 2) *In whom I am well-pleased* (comes from Is 42:1 and refers to the S\_\_\_\_\_ Servant).
        - a) Eventually this person who suffer for the s\_\_\_\_\_ of God's people (Is 53)
        - b) Everyone thought this Servant to be different than the Messiah
      - c. Jesus fasted 40 days and nights because of the weight of this m\_\_\_\_\_ of suffering.
    3. Jesus later explained that His disciples did not NEED to fast while He was on earth (time of rejoicing) but would do so in time of s\_\_\_\_\_ when He is taken away (Matt 9:14,15)

- When your circumstances are of such weight that you do not feel like eating, that is when you n\_\_\_\_\_ to fast, which involves focused p\_\_\_\_\_
  1. The people of Israel SHOULD have been devastated by their sin to the point of f\_\_\_\_\_ in prayer (Joel 1:14; 2:12)
  2. You NEED to fast when the circumstances call for it, but when you h\_\_\_\_\_ the fast ends. However, prayer must n\_\_\_\_\_ end (we need to strive to keep those lines of communication open – pray always).

**Conclusion:**

- What is biblical fasting? - It is p\_\_\_\_\_ with such intensity that you skip eating because you have no appetite.
- When is fasting biblical? - When you face circumstances that are so overwhelming, that you don't f\_\_\_\_\_ like eating.
  1. This when you n\_\_\_\_\_ to fast
  2. When you hunger, the fast is o\_\_\_\_\_, but the prayers should continue.