



We live in a world filled with conveniences designed to make our lives comfortable. While these conveniences are wonderful gifts, they can also make it difficult to embrace spiritual disciplines that require sacrifice. In Matthew 6:16–18, Jesus teaches His followers about fasting, a practice that intentionally sets aside food to seek God through prayer and humility. Rather than fasting to gain the attention or approval of others, Jesus invites us to pursue a genuine relationship with our Heavenly Father. We discover that God's people practiced both fasting and feasting as ways to express their dependence on Him and celebrate His goodness. In this passage, we'll consider how fasting can reveal what captures our attention and redirect our hearts toward God.

1. What's one modern convenience that makes your life significantly more comfortable? How would your daily routine change if you had to live without it?
2. Read **Matthew 6:16**. Jesus repeatedly warns His followers against practicing spiritual disciplines to gain the approval of others. Why do you think we're sometimes tempted to make our faith more about appearance than genuine devotion to God?
3. Read **Esther 4:15–17** and **Esther 9:20–22**. What do these passages teach us about the different purposes of fasting and feasting? How can both practices help us grow in our relationship with God?
4. Read **Zechariah 8:18–19** and **Joel 2:12–13**. What do these passages reveal about God's desire for His people? How can fasting become an expression of genuine repentance and dependence rather than simply an outward religious practice?
5. Read **Matthew 6:17–18** and **Psalms 139:1–4**. Jesus reminds us that our Heavenly Father sees what is done in secret. How does knowing that God sees and knows us personally change the way we approach spiritual disciplines like fasting and prayer?
6. Read **Acts 13:1–3** and **Acts 14:21–23**. The early church practiced fasting and prayer while seeking God's direction and appointing leaders. What can we learn from their example about the relationship between fasting, prayer, and making important decisions? Where might you need to seek God's wisdom in your own life?
7. Read **Matthew 4:1–4** and **John 6:35**. Jesus reminds us that we do not live by bread alone and later describes Himself as the bread of life. What do these passages teach us about our deepest spiritual needs?
8. Have you considered taking a day to fast and seek the Lord?