

# Fasting for God

Matthew 6:16-18

## I. Jesus Assumes That We Will Fast (vs. 16a)

Matthew 9:14-15  
Acts 13:1-3; 14:23  
1 Corinthians 7:3-5  
2 Corinthians 6:4-5; 11:27-28

## II. Jesus Warns Us Against Hypocritical Fasting (vs. 16)

### 1. The Goal of Hypocritical Fasting

Isaiah 58:3-8

### 2. The Reward of Hypocritical Fasting

As John Piper has helpfully observed:

Jesus says in the last part of verse 16, “Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.” In other words, if that is the reward you aim at in fasting, that is what you will get and that will be all you get. In other words, the danger of hypocrisy is that it is so successful. It aims at the praise of men. And it succeeds. But that's all. (<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/fasting-for-the-fathers-reward>)

## III. Jesus Admonishes Us to Heartfelt Fasting (vss. 17-18)

### 1. The Goal of True Fasting

1 Samuel 16:7

John Piper is insightful when he writes that:

If someone finds out you are fasting, you haven't sinned. The value of your fast is not destroyed if someone notices that you have skipped lunch. It is possible to fast with other people—for example: our staff fasting together on a planning retreat to seek the Lord—it is possible to fast like that and NOT to fast “to be seen by men.” *Being seen fasting* and *fasting to be seen* are not the same. Being seen fasting is a mere external event. Fasting TO BE SEEN is a self-exalting motive of the heart. (<https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/fasting-for-the-fathers-reward>, italics mine)

### 2. The Reward of True Fasting

Matthew 5:12; 6:19-21