



In this season of Lent, we are all being asked to participate in a season of fasting, in whichever form God leads us to. Let's take a look at what Jesus taught about fasting, and let His words shape how we participate in this season of emptying ourselves so we can be filled with more of God.

Read: Matthew 6:16-18

What is the first word of verse 16? What does that tell us about Jesus' expectation, with regard to fasting?

What instruction does Jesus provide as far as what not to do when fasting?

Why is it hypocritical to make it obvious that one is fasting? Whose attention is being sought?

Have you ever put your holiness on display for others, rather than only for God? In what way?

What is the appropriate way to fast, and who should notice it?

What is the promise that accompanies this right way of fasting? What encouragement does this bring you?

Apply It:

Through fasting, we are disciplining ourselves, bringing our flesh under God's care and control, and focusing on the Lord and His provision for us.

What do you turn to when you are stressed? When you are worried? When you are afraid?

What might God be calling you to depend on less, so that you can depend on Him more?

Share with a small group or trusted friend, to share in accountability for each other.

Take it deeper: (you can do this on your own, or with your group if there is time)

Read Isaiah 58.

Spend some time with God, asking Him to shape the look and impact of your fasting. Ask Him to give you right motivations and a right heart so that your fast brings you closer to Him, and ultimately brings you joy.

Prayer:

Father, I know I depend on things other than you for comfort, for satisfaction, and for control. Open my eyes to what is hindering me from being closer to you, and from depending only on you for everything I need. Help me to release my grip on those things, opening my hands to you in surrender and acceptance of what you want to give me. Help me experience the pure joy of being with you, basking in your presence, and being held in your mighty hands.

Amen.