



When we consider God's design for fasting there are 2 sources of scripture that leap out at us. Firstly Jesus' teachings in the Gospels (Matt 6v16-18, Luke 4v2-4, Luke 18v1-14) and secondly Isaiah's prophetic writings particularly Isaiah 58, a whole chapter guided to the concept of the true fast.

From Jesus' teaching we get first off that Fasting is to be **Regular**. He says WHEN you fast. It is the same phrase that He uses about prayer, WHEN you pray (Luke 11v2). Fasting is not something that was intended to be occasional, intermittent or random but it is to be regular and very intentional. It is something that we should plan for and anticipate and have as a normal part of our daily lives.

Secondly from Jesus' teaching, fasting is to be **Real**. He says do not disfigure your faces or accentuate the impact that this fast is having on you physically. Fasting will have an impact on you physically and will be uncomfortable. Food is the obvious aspect to fast as we have a reliance on food for our daily lives and that is why Jesus said "I am the Bread of Life". God is always helping us to get beyond ourselves in this temporary world that we live in and understand that our true life is in Him. So fasting is designed to help our hearts, our spirits, ourselves to know that he is our life and not our bread or water or internet or cellphone. There are many things that we can think are the source of our life and fasting helps us to lay those down and as John Piper quips our heart attitude when we fast should be 'this much, oh God do I love you. This much, O God do I trust you as the source of my life.'

As you skip a meal in a day and you feel that hunger pang, it is a great moment, that moment of reality to say "This much O God do I love you and I would give you even more than this! I would give you my whole life."

Thirdly we see from Jesus' teaching, fasting is for the **Reward of God**. This is very important that we understand that we are not looking for the reward of man but the reward of God. We should not be in it for the result that we want or that we think is appropriate instead we need to come to fasting for the reward of God and be resting in His promise that He says " as we fast in secret, our Father who's in secret sees us in secret and will reward." (Matt 6v18)

We don't need to evaluate and question if our fast was effective or achieve the result that we wanted. That is what Isaiah was attacking prophetically, inspired by the Spirit of God: "in the day of your fast you seek your own pleasure and the oppression of your workers... This is the fast I have chosen to break the yoke of poverty, to undo the chords of oppression." (Is 58.3 & 6-7)

True fasting is not about our personal gain but it is about the reward of God, the advance of His kingdom and his glory and His righteousness in our lives. That is why at the end of Isaiah he says "Your light will break through like the dawn, your healing will quickly appear." (Is 58v8 ff) It's all about God's purpose and God's glory through our surrender to Him.

So as we fast, not getting things the other way around, not having a selfish heart in it but having a heart of honour and worship to God.

**Regular** in our fasting, **Real** in our fasting and seeking the **Reward of God** in our fasting.

God bless you as you worship him in this way.



## Other Recommended Resources

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### Books

A Hunger For God – Desiring God Through Fasting And Prayer.  
John Piper

### Electronic Media

Rick Warren  
Praying & Fasting For A Breakthrough  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mp89-uvE1tA>