

Glorious Alternative 13 - Who is My Audience?

16 “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. Matthew 6:16-18

Jesus is less concerned with whether we fast than with how we fast.

when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen;

Three Biblical Reasons for Fasting

1. We can fast to create a deeper dependence on God.

18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. Mark 4:18-19

Physical hunger can create a space in our lives that God will be more than happy to fill with more of himself.

2. We can fast out of repentance or sorrow for sin.

25 (There was never anyone like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the Lord, urged on by Jezebel his wife. 26 He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols, like the Amorites the Lord drove out before Israel.) 1 Kings 21:25-26

27 When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly. 1 Kings 21:27

3. We can fast in preparation for important decisions or to receive guidance from the Lord.

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. 2 After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. Matthew 4:1

Our hunger reminds us of our need not just for food, but for God's direction.

10 And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 1 Peter 5:10