

Treasure Hunt

- How do vv. 14-15 relate to the rest of the prayer?
- What other passage in Matthew reinforces this relationship?
- Is fasting ever commanded in the Bible?
- What condition leads naturally to fasting, and what does this tell us about the purpose of deliberate fasting?
- Do believers ever fast in the NT?
- What OT prophets anticipate the Lord's condemnation of superficial fasting?
- When should we fast?
- Will there ever be a time when people don't fast any more? When, and why?

Structure of Matt 6:1-18

<p>1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.</p>		
<p>2 Therefore when thou doest <i>thine</i> alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.</p> <p>3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:</p> <p>4 That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.</p>	<p>Mat 6:5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.</p> <p>6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.</p>	<p>Mat 6:16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.</p> <p>17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; 18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.</p>
	<p>7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. 8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. 9 After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, ... Amen. 14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.</p>	

vv. 14-15, Forgiveness and Prayer

Note shift from “debts” to “trespasses”

Compare Matthew 18: a lesson on forgiving **trespasses**

Mat 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall **trespass** against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear *thee, then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

<<three verses>>

Mat 18:21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

(22-34, Parable of the unforgiving servant)

Mat 18:35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their **trespasses**.

Q: What goes in the middle? **A:** Exhortation to corporate prayer!

Mat 18:18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say unto you, That **if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask**, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

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Matt 6:16-18, Fasting: Background

Commaned in the OT for the Day of Atonement:

Lev 16:29 And *this* shall be a statute for ever unto you: *that* in the seventh month, on the tenth *day* of the month, ye shall **afflict your souls**, and do no work at all, *whether it be* one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you:

“Afflict the soul” = “fast”:

Psa 35:13 **I humbled [afflicted] my soul with fasting**; and my prayer returned into mine own bosom.

Isa 58:3 Wherefore have we **fasted**, *say they*, and thou seest not? *wherefore* have we **afflicted our soul**, and thou takest no knowledge?

Fasting as a natural reaction to deep emotion:

1Sa 1:7 And *as* he did so year by year, when she went up to the house of the LORD, so she provoked her; therefore she wept, **and did not eat**.

1Sa 20:34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and **did eat no meat** the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

Fasting in the New Testament

Act 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, **and fasted**, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid *their* hands on them, they sent *them* away.

Act 14:23 And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed **with fasting**, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

1Co 7:5 Defraud ye not one the other, except *it be* with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to **fasting** and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

When Fasting Isn't Fasting

Isa 58:2 Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. 3 **Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours.** 4 Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as *ye do this* day, to make your voice to be heard on high. 5 Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? *is it* to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes *under him*? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? 6 *Is* not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? 7 *Is it* not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? 8 Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.

Zech 7:4 Then came the word of the LORD of hosts unto me, saying, 5 Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned in the fifth and seventh *month*, even those seventy years, **did ye at all fast unto me, even to me?**

The End of Fasting

Zec 8:18 And the word of the LORD of hosts came unto me, saying,
19 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; The **fast** of the fourth *month*, and the **fast** of the fifth, and the **fast** of the seventh, and the **fast** of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and **cheerful feasts**; therefore love the truth and peace. 20 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; *It shall yet come to pass*, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: 21 And the inhabitants of one *city* shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the LORD, and to seek the LORD of hosts: I will go also. 22 Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the LORD of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the LORD.

Rev 21:3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God. 4 And **God shall wipe away all tears** from their eyes; and there shall be **no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain**: for the former things are passed away.