



**SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM
FOR THE SERMON PREACHED: OCTOBER 23, 2016
TITLE: PASSIONATELY PURSUING GOD IN FASTING
PASSAGE: MATTHEW 6:16-18**

1. Complete this sentence: According to this passage in Matthew 6, fasting is:

2. Jesus creates the expectation that fasting will be part of the regular rhythm of the Christian life (**Matthew 6:16**). Has fasting been an ongoing part of your relationship with him? Why or why not? What have been some of the most common barriers for you that have prevented you from fasting? What have you found helpful in your pursuit of this spiritual discipline?

3. Sometimes, fasting carries a wider definition. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said: "To make the matter complete, we would add that fasting, if we conceive of it truly, must not only be confined to the question of food and drink; fasting should really be made to include abstinence from anything which is legitimate in an of itself for the sake of some special spiritual purpose." Could you identify one or two things in your life that you need to abstain from for the sake of a greater pursuit of God in your life? What steps will you take this week to make that happen? Whom do you have in your life to help hold you accountable to this greater pursuit of God in your life?

4. God's people fasted for specific purposes. Read the following passages and list why they fasted:
 - (A) **Ezra 8:21-23:**

 - (B) **Judges 20:24-28:**

(C) **2 Samuel 1:11-12:**

(D) **2 Chronicles 20:1-4:**

(E) **Matthew 4:1-11:**

(F) **Luke 2:33-38:**

(G) Do your own word study on fasting in the Bible. What are some other passages that mention fasting? What do those passages teach about the purpose of fasting for God's people?

(H) Based on your findings in the above passages and your own study, is there a circumstance in your life where you need God to move in a powerful way, and you need to fast for this breakthrough?

5. Someone once said, "The most important part of a Christian's life is the part that only God sees." Why is this statement important in light of **Matthew 6:16-18**? (PERSONAL QUESTION: As you spend time in individual reflection, what is God revealing in the secret parts of your life that you need to abstain from and/or forsake for the purpose of your passionate pursuit of Him?)

6. In **Matthew 6:18**, Jesus says, "And your Father who sees in secret will reward you." What is our ultimate reward in fasting? How does this compare to the reward Jesus says the Pharisees had received (**Matthew 6:16**)? What, specifically, was Jesus condemning about the fasting of the Pharisees? What, specifically, is Jesus teaching us about our motivations in fasting?

7. Spend some time prayerfully considering:

(A) how you will develop a plan to make fasting a regular part of your walk with Jesus Christ. What are some of your initial steps? What is your plan to pray while you fast? How will you respond when you get hungry? What will you do if/when you get 'hunger headaches'?

(B) the purposes of your fasting. What is happening in your life that you need to interrupt what you normally do so you can express to God that you need Him most? Based on the purpose of your fasting, what Scripture passages will you press into during your fast? How will you incorporate personal worship into this time?