

Week 3

January 14th - 20th

## MAKING THE BEST USE OF THIS TIME

# Consecration 2019

It is important to remember some things that Jesus said about fasting in Mt 6:16. The NLT says it like this, *“And when you fast, don’t make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get.”*

Fasting means to abstain from food for a particular cause. From a worldly perspective, fasting is rarely ever taken except as a growing trend for weight loss or to protest something and almost always to attract attention when doing it. From a spiritual perspective, it is a deeply personal experience; a time to set aside food and concentrate on God. Whether done to intercede on someone else’s behalf, to seek a solution to a problem, or to praise God for who He is and/or for what He has done, biblical fasting is praying and intense supplication before God.

Note the words in verses 16 and 17 of Matthew 6, “when you fast”. Jesus implies that believers fasted. In fact, he expects you to fast. He, himself, fasted and taught fasting. The early believers fasted. So few have continued this intense seeking of the Lord. Today, few truly trust God enough to take time to focus on Him. Few consider His help more necessary than satisfying their own cravings.



**The benefits of spiritual fasting are enormous and dangerous when you fast for the wrong reasons.**

That is the why Jesus counsels on the wrong and right motives for fasting. Fasting for the wrong reasons is hypocritical. Here are a few of the reasons why people fast. **Do your own self check and determine where you fit in within these reasons:**

You fast to gain God’s approval or self-approval.

You fast to fulfill a religious ritual or requirement.

You fast to gain religions recognition.

You fast to genuinely meet God for a specific purpose.

Fasting for any other purpose than meeting with God is to be condemned. When you fast personally, make sure that no one knows except God. In a corporate fast, it is different. Others in the corporate body will obviously know; however, make sure that you are not trying to draw attention to yourself.

**Always remember that fasting poses several serious dangers that must be guarded against.**

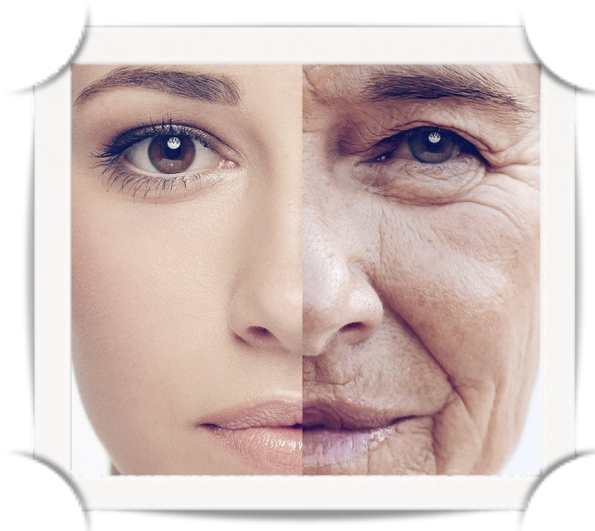
1. The danger of feeling SUPER-spiritual. You need to guard against the feeling of pride.
2. The danger of over confidence. After fasting, you usually feel spiritually confident and more ready to face the problems that confront you, but you must never forget that your confidence is to be in God and not in self. Be certain that you are depending upon the strength of God and not your own effort.
3. The danger of revealing your own fasting experience, especially if it is a personal fast. You sometimes learn so much from being in God's presence that you want to share it, especially with those who are closest to you. The best advice is to say nothing unless you truly feel led by the Holy Spirit to share. When you do, be sure to draw attention to God's sufficiency and not yours.
4. The danger of changing your personal appearance, actions, or behaviors. Any change from your normal behavior attracts attention and can ruin the benefit of fasting. As Jesus said, "they make it obvious".

There is a right way to fast. Fasting the right way should be done without notice. Fast before God and not before people. There is to be no change in behavior or appearance to indicate that you are fasting. Think about it: Why should anyone know that you are seeking God in a special way? The matter concerns you and God and not other people. If you fast in the right way, God will reward you openly.

## Our Guide To Praying

At this point, we will ask for everybody to abstain from beef and any other red meats in addition to the other things that we have asked you to take out of your diet for the duration of the fast. Please meet us in prayer for additional teaching and lessons for your learning.

Corporate Prayer is on Mondays at 7PM and Fridays at 7:30 PM.



### Think About It

*"when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting."  
Matthew 6:16 NLT*