



In today's passage, Jesus gives us profound insights into the nature of spiritual disciplines, namely fasting, as practiced by Jesus' followers. In these verses, Jesus emphasizes the importance of authenticity and humility in our spiritual disciplines, fasting discreetly rather than seeking the admiration of others. As seen throughout the Sermon on the Mount, today's passage points to the attitudes and behaviors that characterize genuine righteousness. By instructing His followers to anoint their heads and wash their faces, Jesus contrasts sincere devotion with religious practices motivated by the recognition of others. Today, we dive into the context, theological significance, and practical applications of Jesus' teachings on fasting, inviting us to reflect on our motivations regarding spiritual practices.

Key Passage: Matthew 6:16-18

Discussion Questions:

1. What does Jesus mean when he says, "when you fast," and how does this imply an expectation for his followers? What role has fasting played in your spiritual life?
2. In what ways can fasting become a means of seeking approval from others rather than a spiritual discipline?
3. How does fasting in secret align with the theme of humility and sincerity in the Sermon on the Mount?
4. What are the implications of the phrase "your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you"?
5. In light of today's passage, is corporate fasting wrong? Doesn't Jesus warn us to do it in secret? If it's not wrong, what is its corporate benefit?
6. How can we ensure that our fasting (or practicing other spiritual disciplines) is motivated by a focus on God? What role does intentionality play in fasting and other spiritual disciplines?