



THE REWARD OF GOING HUNGRY



Matthew 6:16-18

¹⁶ “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷ But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, ¹⁸ that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Jesus encourages us to fast in order that we might receive personal reward from our Heavenly Father. What is the reward of not eating?

Fasting helps us recognize those hungers that diminish the joy we have in Jesus.

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- **We identify our greedy appetites more clearly.**

Ephesians 4:17-24

¹⁷ Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ¹⁸ They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their **hardness of heart**. ¹⁹ They have become **callous** and have given themselves up to **sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity**. ²⁰ But that is **not the way you learned Christ!**—
²¹ assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, ²² to **put off your old self**, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through **deceitful desires**,

Ephesians 4:17-24

²³ and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, ²⁴ and to **put on the new self**, created after the likeness of God in true **righteousness and holiness**.

Fasting helps us recognize those hungers that diminish the joy we have in Jesus.

- We see ourselves more accurately.
- We identify our greedy appetites more clearly.
- **We experience the intensity of our old cravings more honestly.**

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- We begin to happily deny the appetites which control us.
- **We take more time in direct communion with Him.**

Psalm 46:10

16 “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

Fasting enhances the joy experienced in increasing, deepening communion with God.

- We begin to happily deny the appetites which control us.
- We take more time in direct communion with Him.
- **We have increased experiences of His love and presence.**

Psalm 16:11

¹⁶ You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Romans 14:17

¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

For Monday:

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- **Seriously consider the greatest reward!**

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- **Happily devote yourself to pursuing the greatest reward!**

1st Monday | March 4th

GOD IS MY PROVIDER

MORNING

READ:

Genesis 1:1-27

CONSIDER:

Spend some time appreciating that God has created everything we experience (or at least the raw material from which everything is derived). Look at the sun, the sky, the land, the mountains...

TALK TO GOD:

Get outside this morning (if you can) and talk/listen to God regarding His gracious provision.

AFTERNOON

READ:

Luke 4:1-13

CONSIDER:

Think about all the things that the enemy uses to distract us from our relationship with God. Look at Jesus' response to each temptation. How are you tempted to pursue provision, power, and protection apart from God? What do those things look like coming from God?

TALK TO GOD:

Ask God for the wisdom to identify and reject counterfeit solutions.

EVENING

READ:

Psalm 23

CONSIDER:

The Lord is the Good Shepherd. He desires to be our Good Shepherd. What does that mean for us? How do we respond to Him? What's our relationship? How do we lean into that relationship more fully? How can we rest in it more fully?

TALK TO GOD:

Thank God for the current and eternal truth of this Psalm.