

Don't Be an Actor, pt. 3  
Matthew 6:16-18

The chief topic of 6:1-18 is not being a \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus uses three illustrations to make his point. He uses giving alms, praying and fasting.

That word, hypocrite, is simply a Greek word for someone who played a \_\_\_\_\_. It was a common word in their culture. The actor would stand behind a mask and speak. Jesus says "don't be a hypocrite." When you're giving, don't \_\_\_\_\_ to yourself. The second illustration of praying, don't play a role in the middle of the temple to be \_\_\_\_\_, using ritualistic phrases to be \_\_\_\_\_. When you pray, do this in \_\_\_\_\_.

The final illustration he uses regards fasting. The United States is better known for \_\_\_\_\_ rather than fasting. Think about it, we have an entire aisle at Kroger just for cereals. That being said, \_\_\_\_\_ is not on most people's minds in Olive Branch, Byhalia or anywhere else.

I. Fasting in the OT.

The Hebrew word for "fast" suggests the repentant \_\_\_\_\_ of the soul before God. Know this right up front, there were two perceptions of fasting.

One in the OT and One in the NT. Fasting in the OT **always** had a connection to \_\_\_\_\_ over sin and the \_\_\_\_\_ of it. Fasting was commanded on but one day in the OT: the Day of \_\_\_\_\_. Israel on that day was to mourn for their sin and look for their reconciliation through the sacrifices. Fasting spread to other days of national calamity and specific mourning over sin. You can find fasting in Jonah, I Sam, Judges. Possibly the most extensive reference is Isaiah 58:1-7. Here the people of God \_\_\_\_\_ that they had fasted but there were no \_\_\_\_\_ from Jehovah.

II. Fasting in the NT.

After Jesus came, fasting took on a different perspective. Christians understood their forgiveness of sins came in the death/burial/resurrection of Jesus so mourning in the OT sense was not necessary.

So, why fast? Fasting was done to set aside the normal distractions of life to seek God's clear direction for their lives. It became a \_\_\_\_\_. Note II Corinthians 6 and Acts. Acts 10 reveals that Cornelius was fasting and praying and God instructed him to find Peter. Acts 13 states that

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the church was fasting and praying and the Holy Spirit set apart Barnabas and Paul for mission work. None of the passages point to fasting being an \_\_\_\_\_ form of piety.

Notice in our passage that Jesus uses the word "whenever" which implies we would fast but it's not \_\_\_\_\_.

III. Fasting \_\_\_\_\_

Remember that by the time of Jesus, Jewish religious life had been perverted and twisted far beyond the biblical norm. Many Pharisees of that day fasted \_\_\_x a week on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> days. They claimed it was because Moses went up Sinai 2x. It also happened to be the days when the markets were busiest and a prime day to be \_\_\_\_\_ by others. They would even put on a show. They would dress very differently and rub ashes on their faces to signify they were fasting, in mourning.

IV. Fasting \_\_\_\_\_

Fasting is simply \_\_\_\_\_ from food for some \_\_\_\_\_ purpose. John Piper wrote "we

fast to nourish our hunger for God and to reduce our hunger for the world. We ought to fast because our physical appetites are so intense that they threaten to overwhelm our hunger for God."

When we fast, the body grows weak, reminding us that we do not live by our strength, provision and planning.

How Do We Fast, Biblically? (Dan Doriani)

Fast \_\_\_\_\_

Fast \_\_\_\_\_

Fast \_\_\_\_\_

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