

## **Matthew 6:16-18**

### When You Fast

*The private fast ...*

#### I. The Practice of Fasting

- A. Intentional Discipline
- B. Spontaneous Reaction
- C. Controlled Deprivation

#### II. The Purpose of Fasting

- A. The Christian's Commitment
- B. Communion with God
- C. Rewarded with Blessing

#### III. The Demeanor of Fasting

- A. Before God
- B. Before Men

*... in the presence of God.*

### ***Children, Listen ...***

1. What is fasting?
2. What is the purpose of fasting?
3. Why is it super important to be in prayer when fasting?

## **An Oft Forgotten Means of Grace**

Fasting appears to be a fairly common practice among believers in the Bible, so much so that Jesus assumes his disciples will fast. The practice does not seem to be generally super popular with Christians in our culture. It is often seen as something only the ultra-pious do or it is even sometimes relegated to a dramatic Youth Group activity where the cause can easily be lost on "starving" teenagers. But we rob ourselves when we neglect this valuable spiritual discipline. There are many reasons for us to fast in order to focus on some issue relevant to the kingdom of God and our relationship to the Lord. Planned private, congregational and even public fasts may be appropriated at times, while at other times some event may prompt a spontaneous fast. It is also a wise practice to build into your pursuit of growth in the Lord. Whatever the occasion may be for a fast, special care must be taken to go about it the proper way and with the proper demeanor. Further a period of fasting must be attended by intensive prayer and study of God's Word. While many things may prompt fasting the main purpose is to draw near to God through Christ and the ministry of the Holy Spirit.