

Wednesday *Where do you give your attention?*

Read Matthew 6:16-18

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *What does fasting mean to you? Can you fast from things other than food?*
2. *What rewards do you think God has in store for you?*

Prayer Focus

Jesus, you know what I pay attention to every day, where I spend my energy. Guide me to you, show me the things that are worthy of my attention. Let it be our secret.

Thursday *What things are most important to you?*

Read Matthew 6:19-20

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *What things do you long for most? What would you do to attain those things? What would you give up?*
2. *What do you think are the treasures in heaven? What would you do to attain those treasures? What would you give up?*

Prayer Focus

Blessed One, you know where we go to collect our treasures. You know how much time and energy we spend chasing after things that can never last or can never be. Change our minds. Change our days. Let us see what life might be like if we put you in charge of our priorities.

Friday

Read Matthew 6:21 *What is your priority?*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *Where is your heart today?*
2. *What can you do this week to align your heart with God's?*

Prayer Focus

Pray in secret to have God change your heart and your habits. Pray to be able to truly fast and that the things of this world have less of a grip on your life. Pray that you will find freedom in listening to what God desires most. Pray for the desire to pursue God's treasures.

Fasting

Jesus gives instructions for fasting.

Fasting is a way of seeking the isolation of the wilderness in the midst of our busy world. When we fast, we make space in our regular routine, which we can fill with prayer. Fasting also can sharpen our focus, and allow us to experience God's presence more clearly. Additionally, fasting reminds us of the blessing of our daily bread, and instills in us a renewed commitment to be in solidarity with those around the world who have been limited in their access to the blessings of God's abundance.

Message Notes:



Small Group Format

Welcome

- Introductions/getting acquainted
- Mutual Invitation question: *Have you ever fasted? What was that experience like for you? Do you think fasting can make a difference in your faith life?*

Opening Prayer

Song (optional)

Reflection on Scripture

- Have someone read **Matthew 6:1-6 and 16-21**. Discuss observations about the text.
 - *What word or phrase strikes you the most?*
 - *What do you think is the most important point of the text?*

Application of Scripture (The central transformative questions)

- What did you hear God say to you through this week's Scriptures?
- What are you doing about it?
- How can we support you?

Share your faith (in groups of 3)

- *How have you experienced God recently in your life?* (This is a weekly question - it may be difficult to answer at first, but if you ask it each week you may start to notice God more in your life.)

Pray for each other

Refreshments (optional)

March 17, 2019

Fasting

Monday

Read **Matthew 6:1-4** *How do you give?*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *What does it mean to give in secret?*
2. *Who do you want to really see you when you give?*

Prayer Focus

God of all, you know when I want people to see me doing the right thing, when I want approval from others more than I want approval from you. Help me to give out of love for you and for all you've done for me, and not for any glory it might bring to me. I remember with gratitude all that you already provide.

Tuesday

Read **Matthew 6:5-6** *How do you spend your time?*

Questions for Reflection and Application

1. *If no one sees us praying or worshiping, how can we show others we are Christians? Is that important?*
2. *How much time do you spend alone with God? How might your life change if you spent more time in private communication with God?*

Prayer Focus

Choose a time this week when you might spend more time in quiet, private prayer. Let that time be just between you and God. Pray to draw closer to God and to listen to what God has to say to you. Fast from the regular distractions that keep you from prayer.