

A Study of the book of Matthew: Chapter 6 v. 16-21

- **After giving instructions on how we are to pray and forgive others, Jesus then goes on to tell the people the manner in which they should fast (v. 16-18)**
 - What was (and is) the purpose of fasting? _____
 - Though many people use it as a “health” tool in today’s world, fasting was originally used for different things like mourning, studying the Bible, or simply meditating (focus/prayer) on God. This wasn’t just featured in Old Testament times, but was a large part of the early church as well (Acts 14:23).
 - Jesus immediately mentions not to be like the hypocrites. What is wrong with the way in which they are fasting?
 - The hypocrites intentionally allow themselves to look disheveled and sport “gloomy faces”, bringing attention to themselves.
 - As has been mentioned many times in this chapter, they have the wrong heart/intentions with their actions.
 - What is the reward that these people receive for their fasting? _____
 - Instead of outwardly showing that they are fasting, Jesus tells them to anoint their heads and wash their faces (clean up!). Why would Jesus instruct them to do so?
 - When a person fasts, that time and emphasis is between themselves and God. Being private about fasting not only allows us to keep it between ourselves and God, what needs to be between us a God, but also makes sure our hearts and minds maintain the proper focus.
 - When we choose to fast properly, what are we promised? _____
 - Where in recent verses can we see a similar promise and its fulfillment? (Matthew 6:6)
- **Jesus then goes on to teach the people on where to put their focus (v. 19-21).**
 - What do people say is the root of all evil? _____
 - What is it that makes money so “evil”? _____
 - We often consider materialism to be a modern day issue, but is it something that people in biblical times faced?
 - Jesus isn’t trying to say that having physical goods is evil; instead, the point is that our lives should be focused on building up “wealth” in heaven!
 - Read Mark 10:17-27. What is it that kept the rich young ruler from following Jesus?
 - There was no sin in the rich young ruler having his possessions, but his heart choosing his possessions over Christ kept him from following Him.
 - How do we build up treasure in Heaven?
 - We do this by doing righteous things for God.
 - Should we have to guess where our treasure is built up? Read verse 21.
 - By no means! Where our treasure is at, so our heart will also be. If someone’s heart chases after the world, it will be evident in their pursuits, focused on the world. If their treasure is in Heaven, then their hearts and pursuits will be focused on Heaven.