



Sacred Rhythms

The Art
of Empty

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's legs and feet as they run on a dirt path. The person is wearing white athletic shorts, white socks, and a pair of blue and black running shoes with red accents on the soles. The background is a soft-focus green field, suggesting an outdoor setting. The overall tone is motivational and active.

Recap

Most of us are good at **random acts of giving**. We can be easily persuaded, inspired, or even guilted into doing something to meet a particular need in the moment. Often there is some sort of sales pitch involved and we think, Wow, maybe I should give to that.

But what if the act of giving and a **lifestyle of generosity** are two very different things?

**What you give to God
you get back from God.**



Prayer



**But when you pray, go away by
yourself, shut the door behind you, and
pray to your Father in private. Then
your Father, who sees everything, **will
reward you.** Matthew 6:6**



Recap

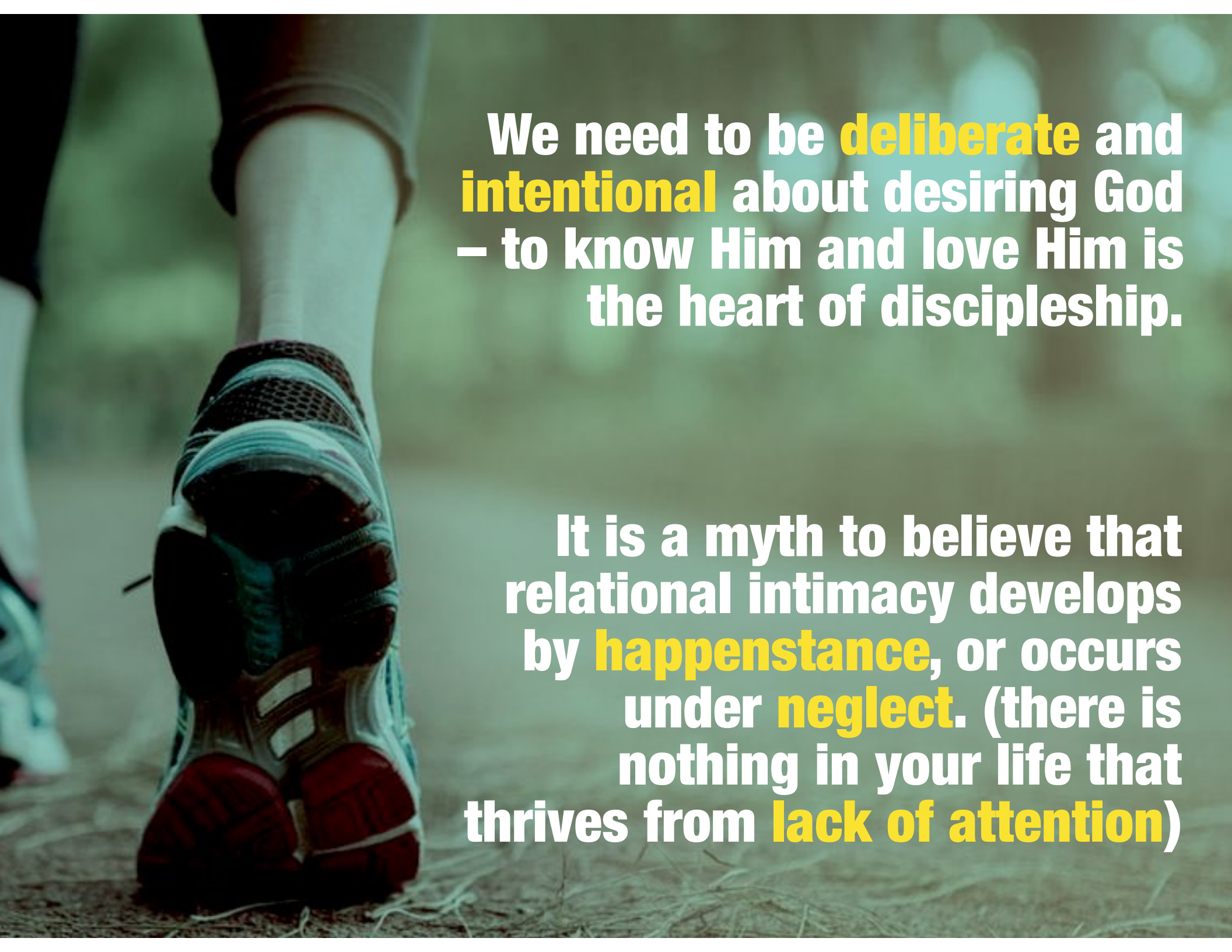
I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ
Philippians 3:7-8



advertising creates
artificial need

artificial need creates
insatiable desire

insatiable desire creates
inflated consumption



We need to be **deliberate** and **intentional** about desiring God – to know Him and love Him is the heart of discipleship.

It is a myth to believe that relational intimacy develops by **happenstance**, or occurs under **neglect**. (there is nothing in your life that thrives from **lack of attention**)

Three Ways Not to Approach Spiritual Disciplines

Do not practice spiritual disciplines to get on God's good side.

*No amount of praying, Bible reading, witnessing, or fasting—or any other discipline—has the power to change your **standing before God**.*

Do not avoid spiritual disciplines out of fear of legalism.

*While spiritual disciplines can turn into a form of mere moralism, they don't have to. There's nothing inherently wrong **with putting forth effort to grow in godliness**.*

Do not treat spiritual disciplines as an all-or-nothing pursuit.

*The ultimate goal is to grow in your love for God. **Expect temporary setbacks and occasional resets**, and ask for God's grace to move forward and grow.*



Search for the Lord and for his strength;
continually **seek** him. **1 Chronicles 16:11**

Keep on asking, and you will receive
what you ask for. Keep on **seeking**,
and you will find. Keep on knocking,
and the door will be opened to you.
For everyone who asks, receives.
Everyone who **seeks**, finds. And to
everyone who knocks, the door will
be opened. **Matthew 7:7-8**

spiritually ambitious

he rewards those who sincerely
seek him. **Hebrews 11:6b**

The Lord looks down from heaven
on the entire human race; he looks
to see if anyone is truly wise, if
anyone **seeks** God. **Psalms 14:2**

Seek the Lord, all who are
humble, **Zephaniah 2:3**

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's right foot in a modern running shoe, stepping on a dirt path. The shoe is primarily black and white with red accents on the sole. The background is a soft-focus natural setting with trees and foliage, overlaid with a semi-transparent teal filter. The text is positioned on the right side of the image.

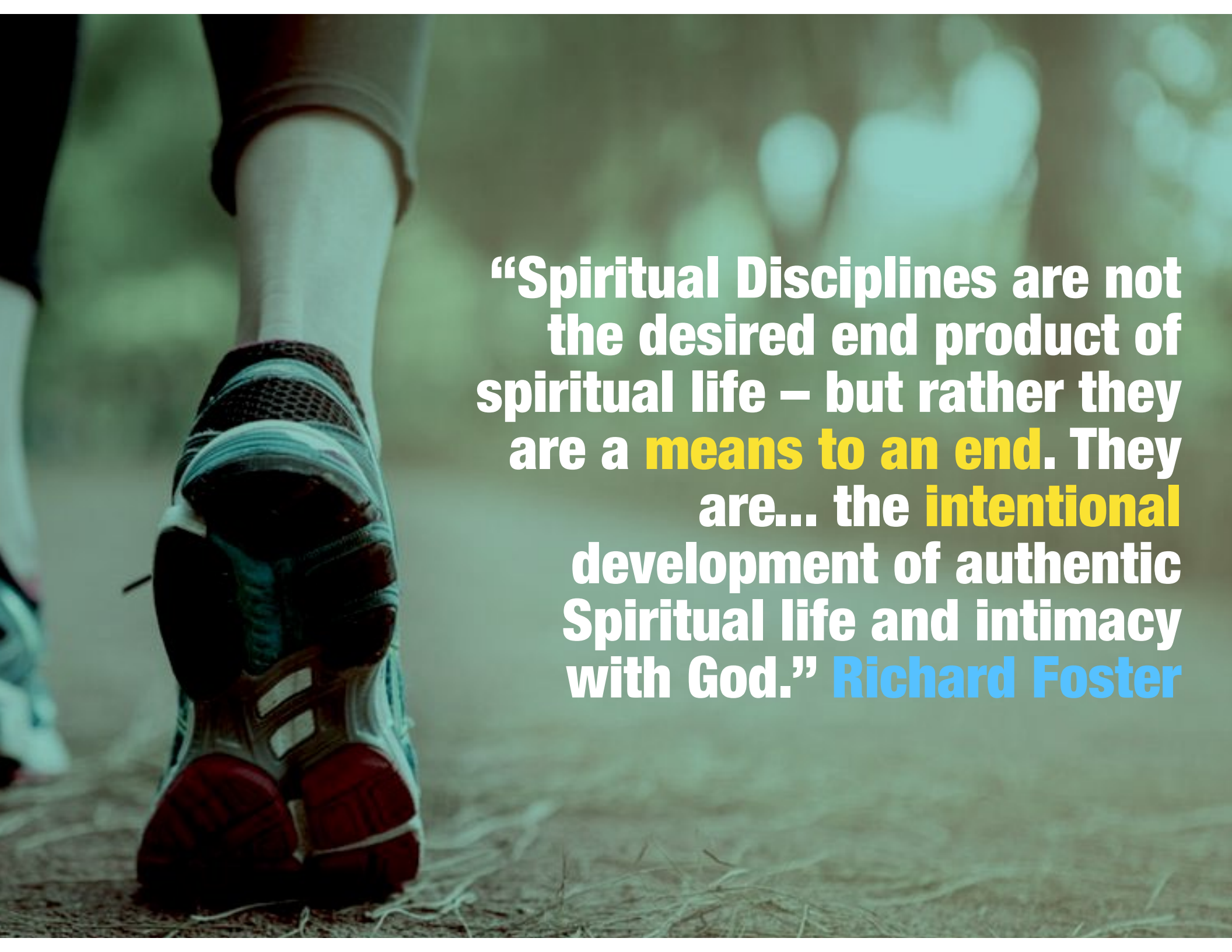
**What if Christianity
was simply the act
of continually
seeking God?**



train, don't try

Do not waste time arguing over godless ideas and old wives' tales. Instead, **train yourself to be godly.**

“Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.” **1 Timothy 4:7-8**

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's leg and foot in a running shoe, captured mid-stride on a dirt path. The shoe is white with blue and red accents. The background is a soft-focus natural setting with trees and foliage. Overlaid on the right side of the image is a quote in white and yellow text.

“Spiritual Disciplines are not the desired end product of spiritual life – but rather they are a **means to an end. They are... the **intentional** development of authentic Spiritual life and intimacy with God.” **Richard Foster****

Three Categories of Spiritual Disciplines

Richard Foster

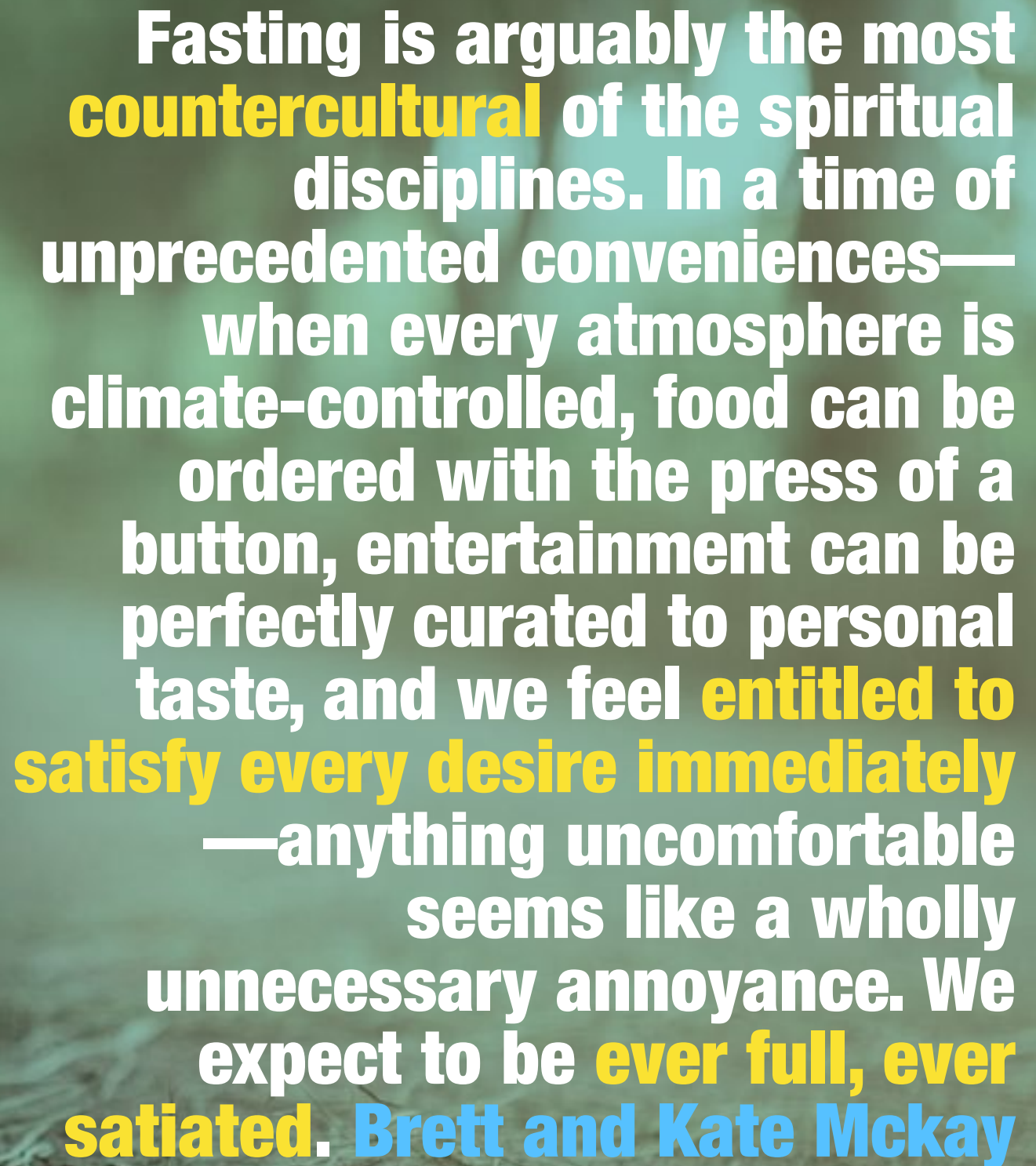
**Inward
Disciplines:**
Prayer
Fasting
Study
Meditation &
Contemplation

**Outward
Disciplines:**
Simplicity
Solitude
Submission
Service
Giving

**Corporate
Disciplines:**
Confession
Worship
Guidance
Celebration



Our third discipline is fasting

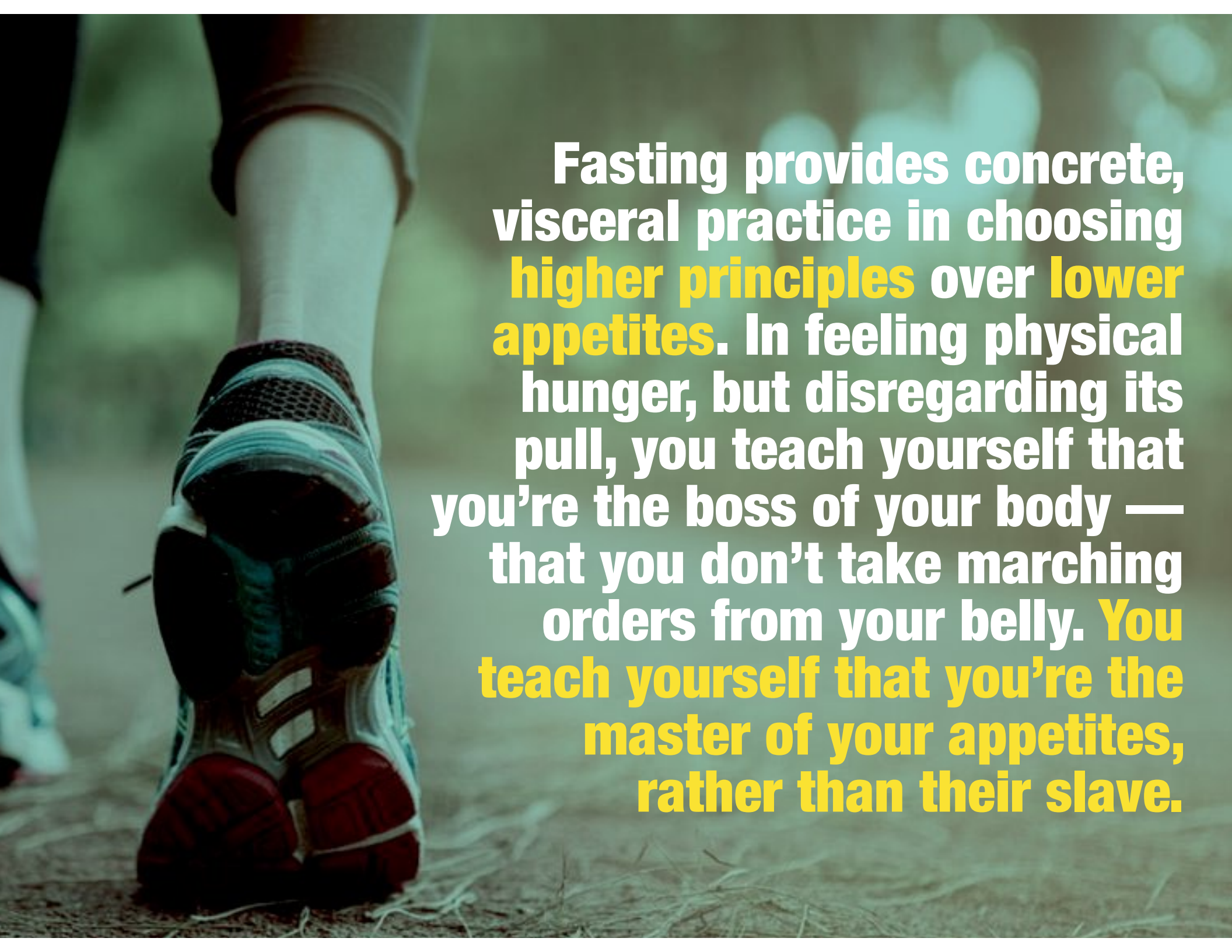


Fasting is arguably the most **countercultural** of the spiritual disciplines. In a time of unprecedented conveniences—when every atmosphere is climate-controlled, food can be ordered with the press of a button, entertainment can be perfectly curated to personal taste, and we feel **entitled to satisfy every desire immediately**—anything uncomfortable seems like a wholly unnecessary annoyance. We expect to be **ever full, ever satiated.** **Brett and Kate Mckay**

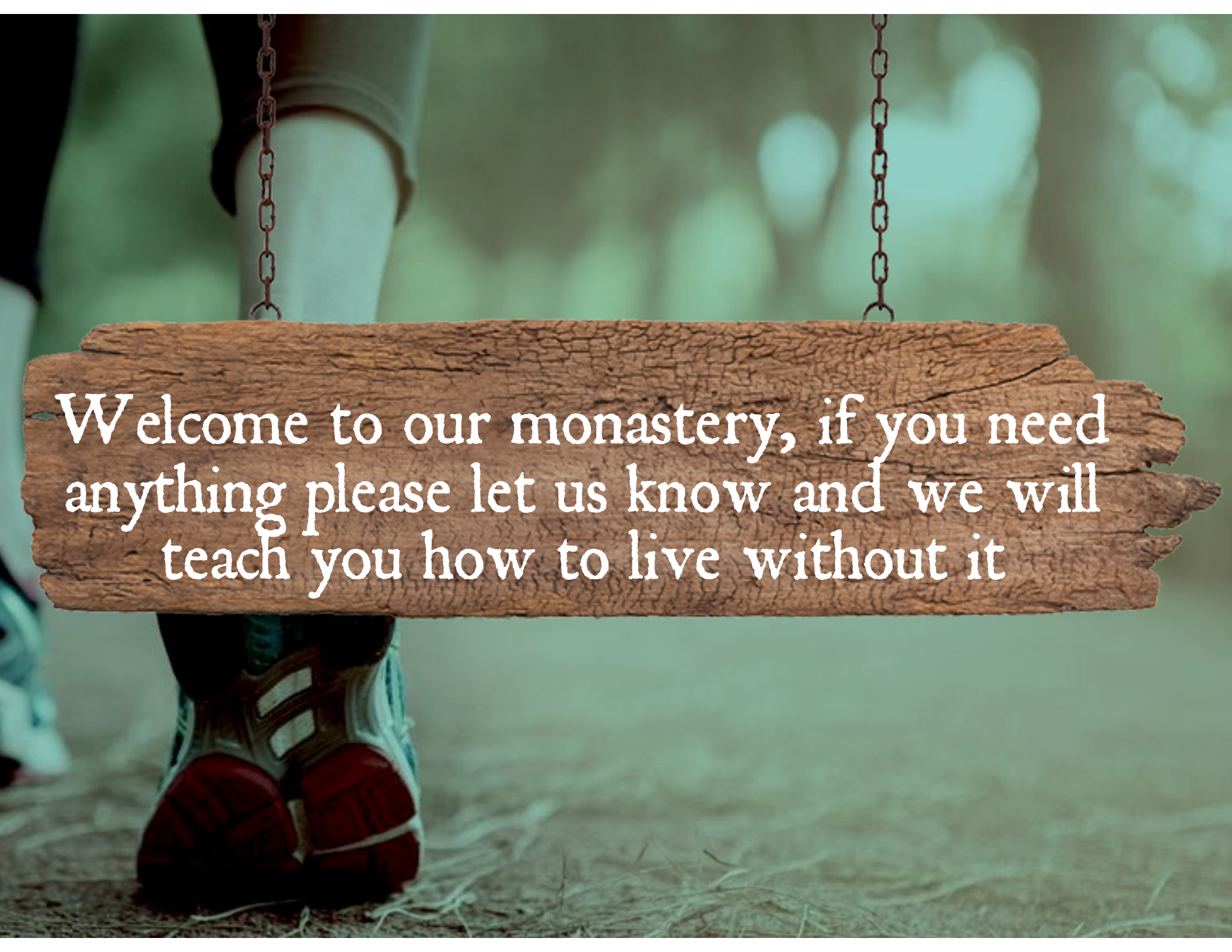


**“More than any other
discipline fasting
reveals the things
that control us.”
Lynne M. Baab**

**What you refuse to
give to God will
limit/define your
growth with Him**



Fasting provides concrete, visceral practice in choosing **higher principles over **lower appetites**. In feeling physical hunger, but disregarding its pull, you teach yourself that you're the boss of your body — that you don't take marching orders from your belly. **You teach yourself that you're the master of your appetites, rather than their slave.****

A wooden sign with a rough, weathered texture hangs from two metal chains. The sign is the central focus, displaying a message in white, serif font. In the background, the lower legs and feet of a person wearing sandals are visible, suggesting an outdoor setting. The overall color palette is muted, with a teal or greenish tint.

Welcome to our monastery, if you need
anything please let us know and we will
teach you how to live without it



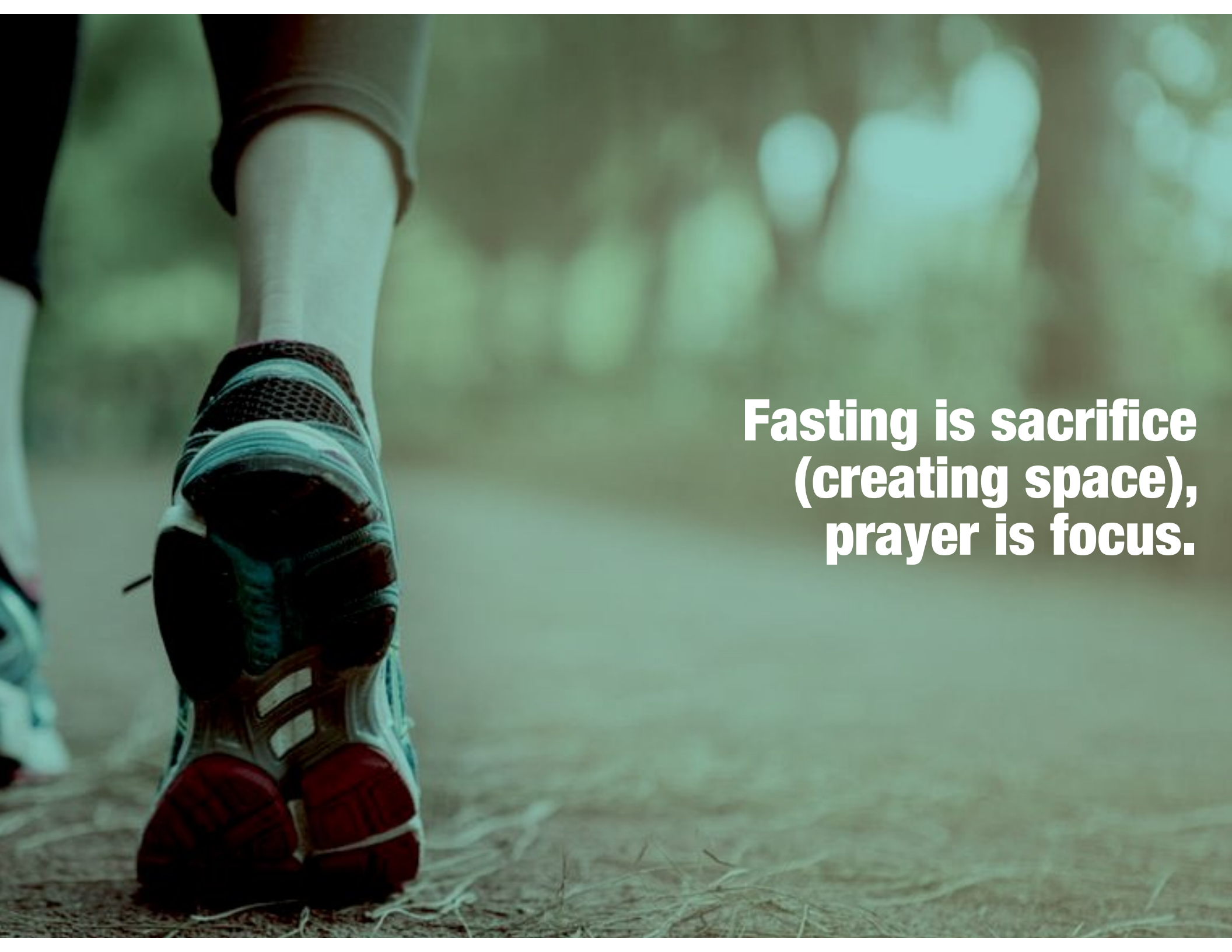
The Spirit gives life; the **flesh** counts for nothing. **John 6:63**

Because of the weakness of your **human nature**, **Romans 6:19**

For the **flesh** desires what is contrary to the Spirit, **Galatians 5:17**

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your **desires that battle within you**? **James 4:1**

to abstain from **sinful desires**, which wage war against your soul. **1 Peter 2:11**

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's right foot in a running shoe, stepping on a dirt path. The shoe is white with blue and red accents. The background is a blurred natural setting with trees and foliage, suggesting a park or trail. The overall tone is teal and green.

**Fasting is sacrifice
(creating space),
prayer is focus.**

A close-up, low-angle shot of a person's legs and feet as they run on a dirt path. The person is wearing white athletic shorts, white socks, and black and white running shoes with red accents. The background is a blurred natural setting with green foliage.

Fasting is Responsive

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and **fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. **Nehemiah 1:4****

So I turned to the Lord God and **pleaded with him in prayer and fasting. I also wore rough burlap and sprinkled myself with ashes. **Daniel 9:3****

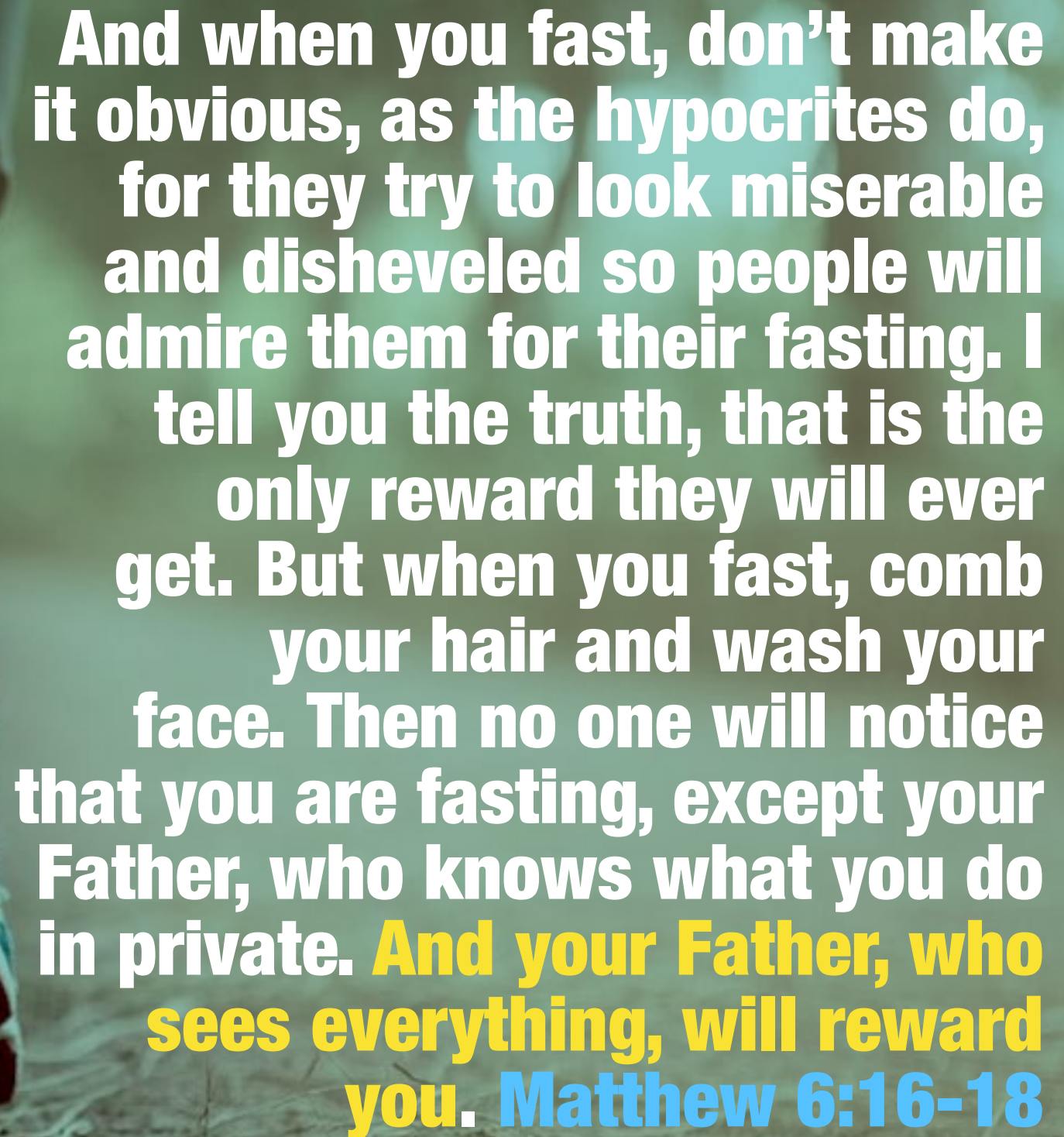
In the times of turmoil/searching we give up something in order to focus our attention upon God



Fasting is Preparation

“Go and gather together all the Jews of Susa and **fast for me**. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. **My maids and I will do the same**. And then, though it is against the law, I will go in to see the king. If I must die, I must die.” **Esther 4:16**

where he was tempted by the devil for forty days. Jesus **ate nothing** all that time and became very hungry. **Luke 4:2**



And when you fast, don't make it obvious, as the hypocrites do, for they try to look miserable and disheveled so people will admire them for their fasting. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. Then no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private. **And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you. **Matthew 6:16-18****