
❖SERMON NOTES ❖

Sunday, February 24, 2013

“THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF FASTING”

(Matthew 6:16-18)

Today we focus our thoughts on the spiritual discipline of fasting. We find it practiced throughout both the Old and New Testaments. Yet, it is seldom practiced today. This morning we seek to rediscover the blessings of this spiritual practice.

1. Fasting _____ and honors Him.
2. Fasting has a _____.
3. Fasting causes individuals to _____
to God’s _____ and His Word.
4. Fasting brings individuals to _____
of sin.
5. Fasting demonstrates the _____
when praying for something.
6. Fasting releases God's _____.
7. Fasting deprives our most basic desire for food in order to help
us focus on the _____.

Examples of Biblical Fasts:

_____ fasted before he received the Ten
Commandments. (Exodus 34:28, NIV).

_____ fasted before a miraculous victory.
(2 Chronicles 20:2-3, NIV).

_____ fasted in order to receive guidance from God.
(Daniel 9:21-22, NIV).

_____ **fasted when overwhelmed by a major task.**
(Nehemiah 1:4, NIV).

_____ **fasted during His victory over temptation.**
(Luke 4:2, The Message).

_____ **fasted during-decision making times.**
(Acts 13:2-3, NIV).

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“THE SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE OF FASTING”

(Matthew 6:16-18)

- 1. Fasting focuses on God and honors Him.**
- 2. Fasting has a spiritual purpose.**
- 3. Fasting causes individuals to humble themselves and submit to God’s authority and His Word.**
- 4. Fasting brings individuals to acknowledge and repent of sin.**
- 5. Fasting demonstrates the depth of your desire when praying for something.**

“Declare a holy fast; call a sacred assembly. Summon the elders and all who live in the land to the house of the Lord your God, and cry out to the Lord.” Joel 1:14 (NIV). *“Even now,” declares the Lord, “return to Me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning”* (Joel 2:12, NASB)

- 6. Fasting releases God's supernatural power.**

“So we fasted and prayed about these concerns. And he listened” (Ezra 8:23, The Message).

“God says, “Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke?” (Isaiah 58:6, NIV).

7. Fasting deprives our most basic desire for food in order to help us focus on the spiritual desire for God.

Examples of Biblical Fasts:

• **Moses fasted before he received the Ten Commandments.**

“Moses was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant--the Ten Commandments.” (Exodus 34:28, NIV).

• **The Israelites fasted before a miraculous victory.**

“Some men came and told Jehoshaphat, “A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from the other side of the Sea. It is already in Hazazon Tamar” (that is, En Gedi). Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah.” (2 Chronicles 20:2-3, NIV).

• **Daniel fasted in order to receive guidance from God.**

*“So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes” (Daniel 9:3, NIV).
“While I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me, ‘Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding’” (Daniel 9:21-22, NIV).*

• **Nehemiah fasted when overwhelmed by a major task.**

“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, NIV).

• **Jesus fasted during His victory over temptation.**

“For forty wilderness days and nights he was tested by the Devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when the time was up he was hungry” (Luke 4:2, The Message).

- **The first Christians fasted during-decision making times.**

“While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.” (Acts 13:2-3, NIV).

“During those seventy years of exile, when you fasted and mourned in the summer and at the festival in early autumn, was it really for Me that you were fasting?” (Zechariah 7:5, NLT).