

# DAY 10

AND WHEN YOU FAST, ANOINT YOUR  
HEAD AND WASH YOUR FACE  
MATTHEW 6:17

One pastor said, *"It is now my regular practice to fast before and during the times I preach. I have a deeper sense of dependency on God and of the immense power of the spoken word. This has been demonstrated by the dear individual in my congregation who runs our tape ministry. She said that since January of this year, her orders for sermon tapes have doubled. 'I can't explain it,' she said, 'but whatever it is, keep it up!'"*<sup>19</sup>

I'll have to check with the lady running my "tape ministry" to see if fasting might make any difference for me!

To fast means to abstain from something. Out of all the disciplines we are looking at this week, this one might be the most foreign for us in America.

One time a friend of mine fasted from the mega-tub of popcorn at the movie theatres for the forty days of Lent (the forty days before Easter). This is not really the kind of fast we are talking about here. As much as he tried telling me it was a sacrifice, it wasn't! Also, guys, while it's tempting to fast from doing laundry and chores, that's not what we're talking about here, either!

To truly fast you ought to abstain from something important in your life, something you think you can't go without, something that you will miss. It's in those moments of craving or missing that you can go to God with your thoughts and also thank Him that He does provide for your needs. The

hunger or the sense of want for what you're fasting from also reminds you to make Jesus your primary want.

Jesus also tells us that when we fast, we don't do it to get recognized by others. You don't fast to make others say, "Wow, that person is so spiritual," or, "Did you see Bob is giving up food for a week? He must have such a good relationship with God." That's not why we do it. **Fasting** is something you do for your own relationship with God. It is an exercise, a discipline, which **brings you closer to God and helps you realize just how much God provides for you**. That's why He tells us to wash our faces when we fast. The Pharisees would fast and make their faces look disfigured and gloomy so when someone noticed something was wrong, they would be able to talk about how they were fasting. They fasted in order to receive the attention, praise, and glory from man. That's not what Jesus wants when He calls us to fast. He wants us to give up something important and remember that He provides.

It's so easy to get caught up in this world with all of its distractions. There are so many days when I get to the evening and realize, "Wow, I didn't spend any time with God today!" I'm sure I'm not the only one. And when I look back at my day, it all seemed important at the time, but if I'm honest I know that no matter how busy I thought I was, there were moments in the day that I wasted or moments I could have included God.

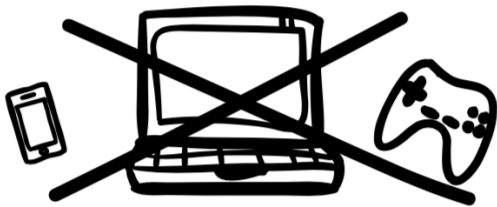
Fasting is a great way to remember God throughout the day. If you fast from food, for example, you will get hungry, and you will remember why you

are not eating that particular day. In that moment, you can go to the Lord and thank Him that He provides for you.

Ultimately God wants our hearts. When we fast, we are giving Him our hearts. We are telling Him, "You are what's most important in my life...all of this other stuff pales in comparison to you. I find everything I need in this world in you."

Many people fast before making difficult decisions. This is a very godly practice. If you've been unsure of a decision, fasting is a good way to clear your mind from worldly things and perhaps receive clarity from God with what He is calling you to do.

Some might choose to fast from food. For others, it might be a fast from television, video games, your cell phone, or Facebook. Some of you may decide to fast for more than a day. Whatever you do, use the time you free up for prayer, and be open to what God might want to do in your life.



FASTING BRINGS  
YOU CLOSER TO  
GOD AND HELPS  
YOU REALIZE  
JUST HOW MUCH  
GOD PROVIDES  
FOR YOU.



#REDLETTERCHALLENGE

These verses mention the kind of fasting the Pharisees were doing versus the kind of fasting God is interested in!

### MATTHEW 6:16-18

16 "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."



## GO ON A FAST TODAY.

Make sure you abstain from something that's meaningful to you and will make a noticeable difference in your life not having it. Most people will choose to fast from food, but you could also give up social media, your cell phone, video games, television, etc. As you are fasting, and you think about what it is that you are giving up, use those moments to pray to God and thank Him for His provision in your life.

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