

SERMON NOTES:

Series: Rhythms of Grace | Part 4: Sacred Rhythms (Journaling, Fasting, Silence & Solitude)

- Sharpening our affections through fasting
- Journaling for Joy
- Rest and Renewal through silence & solitude

David Mathis - *“Fasting is an exceptional measure, designed to channel and express our desire for God and our holy discontent in a fallen world. It is for those not satisfied with the status quo. For those who want more of God’s grace. For those who feel truly desperate for God.”*

Martyn Lloyd-Jones - *“Fasting should really be made to include abstinence from anything which is legitimate in and of itself for the sake of some special spiritual purpose.”*

Spiritual purposes behind fasting: (Donald S. Whitney)

1. **Strengthening prayer** (Ezra 08:23; Joel 2:13; Acts 13:3)
2. **Seeking God’s guidance** (Judg. 20:26; Acts 14:23)
3. **Expressing grief** (1 Sam. 31:13; 2 Sam. 1:11-12)
4. **Seeking deliverance or protection** (2 Chron. 20:3-4; Ezra 8:21-23)
5. **Expressing repentance and returning to God** (1 Sam. 7:6; Jonah 3:5-8)
6. **Humbling oneself before God** (1 Kings 21:27-29; Ps. 35:13)
7. **Expressing concern for the work of God** (Neh. 1:3-4; Dan. 9:3)
8. **Ministering to the needs of others** (Isa. 58:3-7)
9. **Overcoming temptation and dedicating yourself to God** (Matt. 4:1-11)
10. **Expressing love and worship to God** (Luke 2:37)

Fasting (as a means of grace) desensitizes you to the things of this world in order to sensitize you to the things of the Spirit.

Matthew 6:16-18 (NLT)

¹⁶“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. ¹⁷But when you fast, comb your hair and wash your face. ¹⁸Then 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 9:14-15 (NLT)

¹⁴One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him, “Why don’t your disciples fast like we do and the Pharisees do?”

¹⁵Jesus replied, “Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

Acts 9:9 (NLT)

⁹He remained there blind for three days and did not eat or drink.

Acts 13:2 (NLT)

²One day as these men were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Appoint Barnabas and Saul for the special work to which I have called them."

Acts 14:23 (NLT)

²³Paul and Barnabas also appointed elders in every church. With prayer and fasting, they turned the elders over to the care of the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.

John Piper – *"She reveals the measure of good's mastery over us- or television or computers or whatever we submit to again and again to conceal the weakness of our hunger for God. And she remedies by intensifying the earnestness of our prayer and saying with our whole body what prayer says with the heart: I long to be satisfied in God alone!"*

On Fasting:

1. Start small.
2. Plan what you'll do instead of eating.
3. Consider how it will affect others.
4. Try different kinds of fasting.
5. Fast from something other than food.
6. Don't think of white elephants.

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NLT)

⁵Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith.

On Journaling:

1. Keep it simple.
2. Don't catch up.
3. Take God seriously (but not yourself).
4. Bring the Gospel.
5. Stay with it.

David Mathis - *"It is unhealthy to always have people around, and unhealthy to rarely want them. God made us for cycles and seasons, for routines and cadences."*

Father John Breck - *"Silence and stillness are essential to attain spiritual knowledge, to engage in spiritual warfare against the passions and against demonic powers, and to allow the voice of God to be heard. Silence and stillness nevertheless require a certain degree of solitude, a temporary withdrawing from the noise and busyness of the world that cause endless distractions and hinder us in our quest for God...Silence enables us to hear ineffable speech, the words of God that touch, guide and heal, while solitude makes us aware of the discreet yet infinitely powerful presence of the One who is with us "until the end of the age." These two virtues, silence and solitude, enable us to transcend the emptiness of our life."*