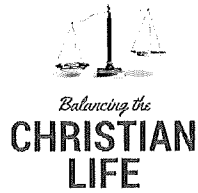


January 2021

Church Life

- If you are a guest with us today, we want to **WELCOME** you! If you haven't done so already, we invite you to stop by our Guest Reception Center in the lobby at the scooter table following the service. Someone will greet you, answer any questions you may have, and give you a gift as a thank-you for worshipping with us today!
- Ladies, **Grace Wednesday Morning Study** is starting a new study on the book of James! This study begins on January 6th at 9:00 am in the sanctuary. No sign-up is necessary. Hope to see you there!
- Want to know what is going on at Grace? Weekly, we email out the E-news. The E-news is a sermon summary written by one of our amazing attenders. Please fill out your connection card if you would like to receive this!
- Ladies, **Woodbridge Moms in Prayer** invites you to join them in praying over the teachers, students, and families in the Zeeland area. This group meets at Grace, the first and third Tuesday mornings at 10:00 am. Please come and join them if you are interested!
- We are **downsizing our library** space to make way for another office and production studio. Any of the **non-fiction books are free** and yours to own. During January, shop for a book(s) in the library located behind the sound booth. Do not take any fiction books - we're still lending those out!



Fasting

Matthew 4:1-4,¹Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ² After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. ³ The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread." ⁴ Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"

Deuteronomy 8:3, ³ He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.

When we fast, we _____ something from our life AND we _____ the time we devoted to that, with _____ time.

Matthew 4:5-7,⁵ Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. ⁶ "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone." ⁷ Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

When we fast, we _____ the negative voice in our head AND we _____ scriptural truths to ourselves instead.

Matthew 4:8-11, ⁸ Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. ⁹ "All this I will give you," he said, "if you will bow down and worship me." ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'" ¹¹ Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

When we fast, we stop placing _____ 1st in our lives AND we begin placing ____ first.

Fasting Tips:

#1 Determine the reason (WHY) for fasting.

- You need to have a cause or reason, or you will give in. Is it Spiritual renewal? Guidance? Healing? Discernment? Kids?

#2 Determine your commitment and write down what you're doing.

There is something that psychologically happens when we write down our goals. People that write down their goals are almost twice as likely to accomplish them!

Write down:

- The reason (the why behind your fast).
- How long it will last? (1 meal, one day, one meal a day, X hours a day, 21 days)
- How do you hope to see God through this fast?
- What physical or social activities you will restrict?
- Write down the commitment to replace the time you were doing the thing you're giving up with time with God praying, reading your Bible, serving, etc.

#3 Prepare Spiritually

- Fasting helps us release strongholds in our lives. Write down those strongholds or sins you want to break. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)
- Accept God's forgiveness of those sins (1 John 1:9)
- Surrender your life fully to Jesus (Romans 12:1-2)
- Pray & read your Bible.

#4 Prepare Physically

- If doing a food fast make sure to consult your physician first. Never fast prescriptions without talking with a doctor. Some people cannot fast without medical supervision.
- If fasting food, before the fast start eating smaller portions. Avoid high fat and sugary foods. Eat more raw fruit and vegetables the two days before you start fasting.
- Turn off the things that hinder you connecting with God.
- Once fasting limit exercise and rest more.
- Prepare for headaches, crankiness, anxiety, hunger pains, dizziness, caffeine and sugar withdrawals, etc. Increasing liquid intake can help with many pains.

#5 Begin Fasting

- Replace the time you spent doing the thing you gave up with praying, reading your Bible, serving, etc.
- Re-visit your commitments as often as you need to remember why you are fasting.
- Fill the void you feel with God.
- The first 2-3 days are the hardest! Push through!
- Begin each day in praise and worship. Set the tone for your day; don't let your body set the tone.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to work in you.
- Invite God to change you. Ask God to show you how you can impact your community, your family, your church, etc.
- Pray for Jesus to give you His vision for your life and the power to live it.

#5 Ending the fast

- Longer fasts need to end gradually. Do not go from no food to White Castle or you will get sick. Do not go from no TV to an all-day TV marathon.
- End the fast celebrating what God has done in your life through the fast. If your prayers have not been answered, maybe it is not time to end your fast.

Fasting Examples:

Christian Book stores have numerous fasting plans / books you can buy if you need help.

Water Only / Nothing: Eat and drink nothing or water only for a period of time. This could mean you give up lunches for a week. It could mean going to water only for a day or more.

Daniel Fast: Eat only fruits, vegetables, nuts/grains.

Juice Fast: Drinking juices only

Screen Fast: Fast all screens when not needed for work/school. No TV, computer, tablet, phone, games, etc.

Parenting Fast: Fast one day per child. Pray for them, their spouse, children, future, job, etc.

1 Meal Fast: Fast one meal a day for a period of time.

1 Day Fast: Fast all food / drinks except for water, for one day.

Sugar Fast: Fast all sugars. This means no processed foods with sugars or drinks with sugar.

Relationship Fast: Dedicate a period of your life to focus on God and not the opposite sex.

Book Fast: Read only the Bible for a period and no other books.

Diabetic Fast: Actually follow your diabetic diet.



Balancing the
**CHRISTIAN
LIFE**

Fasting

DISCUSS: Balance in life is hard. In what part of life do you find it the most difficult to find balance? Why is balance in any area of life so hard?

READ: Matthew 4: 1-11

1. Have you ever considered that the Holy Spirit LED Jesus into the wilderness?
2. How does Scripture tell us Jesus prepared Himself? How long did this preparation take? Have you ever spiritually prepared yourself for 40 days?
3. What was the result of Jesus' preparation?
4. From a Biblical perspective fasting was typically done as a reaction to times of distress and uncertainty read these passages: 2 Samuel 1:12 & Esther 4:15-16. Fasting is practiced by individuals to train them to depend on God in a greater measure. If you have fasted before how have you seen change in your life?
5. What did Jesus use to counter the devil's comments to Him? Read: Deuteronomy 8:3, Psalm 91: 11-12, and Deuteronomy 6:13. Do you know your Bible well enough to use it in times of distress?
6. So, while fasting we use this time to do what?

KEY POINT: When we fast, we remove something from our life AND we replace the time we devoted to that, with God time.

7. What was Satan's point in challenging Jesus in these areas?
8. The enemy does the same thing to us. What areas might he convince us God has left us on our own?
9. How do we combat these negative lies from our enemy?

KEY POINT: When we fast, we deny the negative voice in our head AND we declare scriptural truths to ourselves instead.

10. As you replace the negative words of the devil in your life and REPLACE it with the TRUTH of the Word of God it WILL change your life! Do you truly believe this?

A Quote from Pastor Adam... Satan just said to Jesus, bow down to me and I will give you EVERYTHING you heart desires. The devil whispers that to us too. Why? To make our lives all about our career, our wealth, our personal desires, our kids, our favorite sport, or hobby. Are you making MORE your god. How do we resist that pull? Because if we are honest the desire for MORE is so powerful in our nation. The desire to keep up with the Jones' is so powerful. The desire to be friends with the cool kids is powerful. The desire to make our friends, our significant other, our spouse, our boss HAPPY is powerful. How do we resist?

KEY POINT: When we fast, we stop placing other things 1st in our lives AND we begin placing God first.

11. When Jesus resisted the devil what happened?
12. If we do likewise it will change the course and direction of our life in incredible ways! What is the number one way you would like to see change through fasting?
13. How did the Holy Spirit help Jesus? How will He help you?

REMEMBER THIS: In Jesus' utter dependence upon God the Father for his physical strength, he consistently defied the intentions of the enemy to call him away from his mission. Anytime we fast from something we have become dependent on; we are practicing this difficult art of saying NO in order that we can more faithfully say YES to God.

DISCUSS: Fasting can expose our overdependence on common items, activities, and even people. It can help us bring to light questions of how we are acting as stewards of God's creation. It can also show us where our focus has shifted from God to the world.

The experience of fasting teaches us so much more than we expect as we embark upon it. Fasting dethrones the power of our flesh, so that we can more easily see the move of God in our life and to consequently follow his leading....

