



# SERMON SINGLES

# Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

## **Fasting**

Matthew 6:6-18

INTRODUCTION	NOTES
Fasting is something we honestly know very little about and we don't practice it very much. We know a lot about feasting, but we don't know a lot about fasting, which, in a way, I get. On any given day, I would choose a feast over a fast anytime. Yet, if we want to be on the right side of history, we need to learn about fasting and we need to understand why it is a discipline we should experience. Fasting is just as much a part of the Christian life as other spiritual disciplines like praying and giving. So in this message, I am going to tell you two things we should do with fasting and one thing we shouldn't.	
KEY POINTS	
1. We Should Undertake The Practice Of Fasting Something you should know about fasting is that it is rarely ever practiced alone. It is always linked with prayer. They are joined at the hip. Fasting is the perfect environment for really wanting to pray and seek the Lord at another level.	
When Jesus began His ministry after He was baptized by John, He could have gone out and done a lot of things. He didn't throw a party. He didn't call a press conference. He didn't give a great speech to thousands of people. He didn't do any great miracles or enter a parade. He began His ministry with a forty-day fast.	
He would spend the next three years of His life (in fact His entire ministry) doing one primary thing above all things and that was discipling twelve men. But before He chose His twelve disciples, He fasted and He prayed.	
2. We Should Understand The Purpose Of Fasting The purpose of the fast is not to call attention to yourself. It is rather to put your attention on God. If you are not fasting for the right purpose, you may as well not fast. The goal of fasting is to contemplate God and to concentrate on a spiritual matter. Put simply, fasting forces focus on the Father.	
The purpose of fasting is always spiritual. It is not to lose weight. It is not to try and kick a sugar habit. It is not to make yourself feel better. The purpose of fasting is to force us to remember and realize just how dependent on God we really are.	

TouchingLives.org Fasting

# Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

## **Fasting**

Matthew 6:6-18

	NOTEC
3. We Should Not Undervalue The Power Of Fasting So what happens when you fast? What do you experience when you fast in special ways that you don't experience when you don't?	NOTES
First of all, fasting fortifies faith. Fasting brings faith into focus, and it focuses your faith on the Father just by the very fact that you remember the real source of your strength is not the food on	
your table, but the Father in heaven who puts the food on your table.	
There is something about fasting that gives a power boost to your faith. Fasting intensifies prayer. It is one thing to pray on a full belly, but it is another thing to pray on an empty stomach. It is one	
thing to pray when you are hungry and need to eat and you do. It is another thing to pray when you are hungry and you need to eat, but you don't.	
Fasting just takes your prayer to another dimension. When you	
fast, God bends His ear even more, because when you fast and pray you really are telling God, "Lord, I am desperate. I am in	
earnest. I mean business." Somebody put it this way, "Fasting is a desperate measure, for desperate times, among those who know	
themselves desperate for God."	

TouchingLives.org Fasting

## Touching Lives with Dr. James Merritt

#### **Fasting**

Matthew 6:6-18

#### **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

1.	Have you	ever fasted	before? If	so, what was	your experience l	like?

- 2. If you've never fasted before, what has kept you from practicing this specific spiritual discipline?
- 3. Is there something weighing on you that you feel the nudge to fast and pray about?

TouchingLives.org Fasting