

Living the Christian Life

Sundays@9 – September 11, 2022

Spiritual Discipline: Fasting

“Eating sparingly or _____ from food altogether, either from necessity or desire. In medical terms, fasting is the detoxification of the body through the restriction of food. Spiritual fasting entails setting aside activities as well as reducing the intake of food and replacing these activities with the exercise of _____ and _____ with spiritual concerns.”

-Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible

From the Greek - νέστευό = *to fast, to abstain, one who is* _____

Biblical fasting always centers on _____.

Misconceptions

- _____ of my _____
- God is my magic genie
- Fasting for social/political causes
- Fasting for health purposes
- Fasting for vanity
- Hedonism

What does the Bible say?

- Old Testament - Judges 20:26, 1 Samuel 7:6, 2 Chronicles 20:3-4, Psalm 35:13, 17, Ezra 8:21, Daniel 9:3-19
- Problems - Isaiah 58:1-10, Jeremiah 14:12, Zechariah 7:4-7
 - “Though they fast, I will _____.”
- New Testament - Luke 2:37 fasting is _____
 - Matthew 4:1-11 Fasting to _____
 - Matthew 6:16-18
 - Mark 2:18-22
 - Martin Luther: “It was not Christ’s intention to reject or despise fasting...it was His intention to _____ proper fasting.”
 - Acts 9:3-9
 - Acts 13:1-3

Is fasting a commandment? - Matthew 6:16, Galatians 5:13



What kind of fasts?

- Any time/day - 2 Corinthians 11:27
- Holiday fasts - Leviticus 23:27
- Corporate/National fasts - Jonah ?, Ezra 8:21-23
 - o Spurgeon: "Our seasons of fasting and prayer at the Tabernacle have been high days indeed; never has Heaven's gate stood wider; never have our hearts been nearer the central Glory."
- Fasting from all food and drink
- Fasting from certain kinds of food or drink - Daniel 10:3
- Fasting from other things?

How might fasting form us?

- Fasting reveals the things that _____ - 1 Corinthians 6:12, 1 Corinthians 9:27
- Reminder that we are _____ by God - Hebrews 1:3
- Increased feasting on God's word - John 4:32-34
- Our physical hunger reminds of our spiritual "full belly" in Christ. - John 6:25-40
- Increased _____ of prayer
- God's guidance in decision-making
- Deliverance from bondage to a particular sin
- Bringing _____ - Hebrews 4:15

Practical Matters

- Health concerns - consult your physician first
- Plan and prepare your body
- Do not call attention to what you are doing
- Start _____; end _____
- Devote mealtimes to meditation and prayer
- _____ during the fast and _____ when it concludes!

Takeaways:

- Fasting is good and normative for the Christian
- Our fasting must be unto God, done out of a right desire to glorify Him
- _____ and _____ go together
- Remember Christ who is our true _____ and true _____
- Spiritual growth comes from God, not our own effort