

habits of grace

Enjoying Jesus through the Spiritual Disciplines
October 15th-December 10th

Chapters 10-12

A.J. Hulcy

I. *Fasting*

Philippians 3:17-19 ¹⁷ Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. ¹⁸ For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.

Matthew 6:16 And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.”

Matthew 9:14-15 ¹⁴ “Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast,^[a] but your disciples do not fast?” ¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

II. *Purpose for Fasting*

1. Strengthening prayer (Ezra 8:23; 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)

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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](#))

III. *Variations of Fasting*

Personal & Communal

- *Personal*: Hannah's private fast over her infertility ([1 Samuel 1:7](#))
- *Communal*: Esther's call for all Jews to fast together before she goes before the king ([Esther 4:16](#))

Public & Private

- *Public*: Joel's instruction the people to repent and call for a fast ([Joel 1:14](#))
- *Private*: Jesus' teaching to fast discreetly ([Matthew 6:16-18](#))

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Congregational & National

- *Congregational*: Antioch church fasting collectively together ([Acts 13:2-3](#))
- *National*: Jehoshaphat proclaiming a Judah-wide fast ([2 Chronicles 20:3](#))

Regular & Occasional

- *Regular*: Annual Day of Atonement fast ([Leviticus 16:29-31](#)).
- *Occasional*: Paul/Barnabas fasting as they appointed people to ministry ([Acts 14:23](#))

Partial & Absolute

- *Partial*: Daniel abstaining from “rich” foods ([Daniel 10:2-3](#))
- *Absolute*: Esther's 3 day no food/water fast before she goes before the king ([Esther 4:16](#))

IV. 6 Practical Steps

1. Start small (one meal → day → juice)
2. Plan prayer/meditation time
3. Consider others (love mingles with fasting)

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4. Try group fasts
5. Fast from non-food
6. Turn hunger pangs into eternal anthems

V. Silence and Solitude

Matthew 1:35 ³⁵ And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

Matthew 14:23 ²³ And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone,