

Series: The Gospel of Matthew – “Fasting to Feasting”

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Matthew 6:16-18, Oct 24, 2021

Fasting in the Bible

Associated in Bible with repentance from sin, breakthroughs in life & prayer, prayers for guidance

With Jesus: Fasting as a way to experience & depend on the reality of God’s kingdom

Lessons Learned through Fasting

- How we use food to avoid certain thoughts or feelings or bring comfort
- The power of our appetites
- “The Marshmallow Test” – increasing strength in facing temptation
- Helping give us charge over our bodies

Difference between Trying vs. Training

1 Cor. 9:25, 1 Timothy 4:7, Luke 6:40

“We tend to *overestimate* what we can do by trying really hard and *underestimate* what we can do by training.” John Ortberg

Spiritual disciplines are not necessarily unpleasant

Ex: Following the command to rejoice, practicing the *discipline of celebration*.

Spiritual Discipline Purpose: To be able to do what you need to do when you need to do it

Choose spiritual disciplines appropriate to the struggles you have

Practicing Fasting with the right spirit (humility, freedom, surrender & grace)

Example: The Pharisees (Luke 18:11-12)

Consider the discipline of secrecy for fasting

Two Approaches

1. *Fasting as Feasting on God*

Good starting fast: 24 hour, dinner to dinner fast

Jesus in the Wilderness (Matthew 4:2-4)

- Living on the Word that comes from God

Jesus with the Samaritan woman (John 4:32)

- Nourishing power of God’s words and will - “I have food to eat...”

2. *Fasting as Caring*

Isaiah 48:3-8 – Fasting connected to care for the poor, hungry & oppressed