

Fasting...For The Purpose Of Godliness

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Central Idea

- Jesus both practiced and taught fasting.
- If we want the disciplined pursuit of a Christlike life, we must seek to incorporate the discipline of fasting into our lives.

Fasting

- What are some of the positive and negative aspects that come to your mind when you think about fasting?
- Why do you think fasting is the least practiced discipline in the Christian life?

Fasting

- Definition: Christian fasting is a believer's voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes.
- Believers should fast according to biblical teaching and with purposes that are God centered.
- "Without a clear biblical purpose, fasting becomes an end in itself."

Types Of Fasts

- Normal Fast — abstaining from all food, but not from water. (Matthew 4:2)
- Partial Fast — limitation of the diet, but not abstinence from all food. (Daniel 1:12)
- Absolute Fast — avoiding all food and liquid, including water. (Ezra 10:6, Esther 4:16)

Types Of Fasts

- Supernatural Fast — God's supernatural intervention and miraculous provision. (Deuteronomy 9:9)
- Private Fast — Fasting so not to be noticed by others. (Matthew 6:16-18)
- Congregational Fast — A called fast; congregational fasting together. (Joel 2:15-16)

Types Of Fasts

- National Fast — A fast called by rulers/kings. (2 Chronicles 20:3)
- Regular Fast — once a year, fast on the Day of Atonement. (Leviticus 16:29-31)
- Occasional Fast — A fast occurring on special occasions as the need arises. (Matthew 9:15)

Fasting Is Expected

- Matthew 9:14-15, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” 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.***”
- When is the time that His disciples will fast?

Fasting Is Expected

- Matthew 6:16-18, “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. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret.”

Fasting Is Purposeful

- 1). To Strengthen Prayer.
- 2). To Seek God's Guidance.
- 3). To Express Grief.
- 4). To Seek Deliverance or Protection.
- 5). To Express Repentance and the Return of God.

Fasting Is Purposeful

- 6). To Humble Oneself Before God.
- 7). To Express Concern for the Work of God.
- 8). To Minister to the Needs of Others.
- 9). To Overcome Temptation and Dedicate Yourself to God.
- 10). To Express Love and Worship to God.

Application

- Why is having a biblical purpose for your fasts perhaps “the single most important concept to take from this chapter?”
- How can hunger help us during a fast?
- How important is prayer when we are fasting?
What about confession and repentance?