

Week 32
Fasting

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show men they are fasting. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”
– Matt 6:16-18

Throughout time, Christians have practiced fasting as a spiritual discipline. In the Old Testament, we find many examples of people fasting as a part of their devotion to God, especially at times of dedication and repentance. (See 1 Sam 7:6). The practice of fasting was common in the days of Jesus, so common that Jesus does not need to instruct his disciples to engage in fasting but he does instruct them in how to fast.

The primary purpose of fasting is to remove some of the distractions that exist in our human and earthly life so that we can focus that attention on God. The most common form of fasting is refraining from food.

Spending time focused on God and his reign in our life is valuable. In addition, the hours spent fasting often reveal to us how much we are controlled by our human bodily desires. In fact, we are so controlled by them that we are not even aware of the powerful role they play in our life.

Strictly speaking, fasting refers to voluntarily abstaining from food. However, the idea of fasting can be applied to other distractions in our lives. An alternative form of fasting is to abstain from a favorite activity as a fast. You might consider “fasting” from TV, internet, video games, talking, music, joke telling, etc.

Remember that Jesus tells us not to call attention to the fact that we are fasting. Spend the time freed by abstaining from meals or activities in prayer or service. Use your bodily discomfort to remind you of the purpose of your fast. Each time your stomach grumbles or you have the urge to do what you are abstaining from reflect on the purpose of your fast.

Process of Fasting from food– Unless you have a regular discipline of fasting it is suggested that your first fast is a partial fast lasting 24 hours by beginning at noon (after lunch) and ending at noon (before lunch) you will skip two regular meals. During this time, drink plenty of water and/or some fruit juices.

This Week

- Choose a time and make a specific plan to fast this week.
- After your period of fasting, journal about your experience.

Week 32

Aug 8-14

Sun	<i>What specific action can you do this week related to your growth goals?</i>			8
	Ezra / Nehemiah (6)			
Mon	2Sam 12	Matt 26	Psa 136	9
Tue	2Sam 13	Matt 27	Psa 137	10
Wed	2Sam 14	Matt 28	Psa 138	11
Thr	2Sam 15,16	1Cor 1	Psa 139	12
Fri	2Sam 17	1Cor 2	Psa 140	13
Sat				14