

Slaying the Dragon Week 8

The Purpose of fasting

Sunday 4th November 2018. Message notes.

Introduction

The private disciplines that bring public reward: giving, prayer, fasting.

Jesus expected this from His disciples.

Why fast?

- Intimacy with God
- Self-discipline
- Releases the power of God
- Seeking God's mind and direction
- Miracles can happen
- Breaks the power of Satan
- Renews body, mind and spirit
- Demonstrates to God how serious you are about something
- Expresses genuine repentance

Notes

Digging deeper week beginning 5 November, (should be a blast!). Look at the references.

1. Is fasting and prayer biblical?

Yes. Fasting and prayer is an approved practice in the New Testament as well as the Old.

- I. Jesus fasted and prayed in the wilderness for 40 days, ([Matthew 4:1-2](#))
- II. He also urged others to do it the right way, ([Matthew 6:16-18](#))
- III. Early church leaders received God's guidance by fasting and praying, ([Acts 13:2](#))
- IV. God urged His people to fast and pray, especially when they have drifted, ([Joel 2:12](#))
- V. Prominent characters in the Bible fasted and prayed, ([Daniel 9:3](#))

2. What is its historical basis?

- I. It wasn't strictly Jewish. Pagan nations also have observed the fast, ([Jonah 3:6-9](#))
- II. In the Bible people observed the fast as a means of producing repentance, ([Jonah 3:10](#))
- III. Jews observed the fast on the Day of Atonement. ([Leviticus 16:29-31](#))

3. Is it different from prayer?

We pray regularly to have fellowship with God. Fasting and prayer are spiritual disciplines.

4. Why do we fast and pray?

It's a deliberate act of starving our flesh. When the flesh is starved our spirit becomes stronger, sensitive and more receptive to the Holy Spirit of God.

5. What fasting and prayer isn't

- I. A symbol of the individual religious devoutness or spiritual superiority, ([Matthew 6:16-18](#))
- II. A merit-producing, manipulative or in any other way an act of bargaining with God.
- III. Not a way to move God in closer alignment with us and our will, but rather to draw us in alignment with God and His will!

6. How long must I pray and fast?

- I. Depends. [Hear week 3]. (Discuss the different types and lengths of prayer).
- II. The Bible never encourages long fasts that would be damaging to one's body and mind.
- III. Partial fasts are okay. [Hear week 3]. Remember, God looks at the heart, not the fast.

7. When should I fast?

- I. When anticipating special ministry opportunities, ([Acts 13:3](#))
- II. Deliverance ministry also requires fasting and prayer, ([Mark 9:29](#) – KJV)
- III. When God's will is not clear, ([Acts 13:1-3](#))
- IV. Intercession, ([Esther 4:16](#))
- V. In times of repentance and mourning over national crisis, ([2 Chronicles 7:14](#)) [Implied?]

8. Anything else I should know?

- I. It's always fast **and** prayer. If you are too busy to pray then don't fast. That's just dieting!
- II. When in doubt, always consult your doctor. Don't fast and pray if you are not in the right physical shape for it. [Hear week 3].