

Radical Simplicity

Feasting on God

Matt. 6:15 – 18, 5:3 – 12

I. What is Fasting?

- A. “When you fast” (vs. 16, 17) - fasting is a command
- B. Fast = nesteuo = self denial in order to hear/communicate with God
 - 1. Deep sorrow/mourning – sometimes with sackcloth and ashes
 - 2. Deep desire for relationship with God - feasting on God!
 - 3. Decision to remove something in order to focus attention toward God
- C. Most commonly food, but can be any personal desire
- D. Biblical Fasting
 - 1. A call to community prayer/repentance – Day of Atonement (Four feast fasts per year)
 - 2. A time of mourning/Crisis – crying out to God for help (Nehemiah, Paul)
 - 3. Preparation for large/difficult decisions (Moses – Exodus, Jesus – disciples)
 - 4. Personal spiritual discipline to develop character (Daniel, Jesus)

II. Why Fasting?

- A. Not for a show! (vs. 16)
 - 1. No “somber” or “disfigured” face - instead “wash” your face
 - 2. Not to be noticed - instead “in secret”
 - 3. To be noticed by “your Father”
- B. To develop Beattitudes (5:3 – 12) through fasting
 - 1. “poor in spirit” – knowing that we need God -
 - 2. “mourn” – recognition of sin through sorrow
 - 3. “meek” – controlling personal power in order to serve God
 - 4. “hunger and thirst” – suffering through longing
 - 5. “merciful” – showing mercy to those who don't deserve it
 - 6. “pure in heart” – facing our weaknesses and seeking purity
 - 7. “peacemakers” – living out God's peace in the world
 - 8. “persecuted” and “insulted” – strength to stand

III. K. I. S. S. (Keep It Simple Saints)

- 1. Allow the Spirit to reveal areas/issues that limit your relationship with God.
- 2. Focus on one character issue/Sin at a time.
- 3. It usually takes about 40 days to develop a new habit.
- 4. Corporate fasting grows out of private fasting.