

Sermon Notes

TIP (Take It Personal)

January 19, 2014

Series: *Deepening Your Conversation with God*

Title: *Jesus's Perspective on Fasting and Praying*

Text: *Matthew 9:14-17*

As we continue our series “Deepening Your Conversation with God” it is important for us to look at the spiritual discipline of fasting. When the term “fasting” is used many people think of depriving themselves of food. An idea which is not very appealing. At least not at first glance. However when we look at what Scripture tells us concerning this spiritual discipline it has much more to do with conversing with God than just not eating for a period of time. It has everything to do with a heightened focus on deepening our conversation with God.

Perhaps the combination of prayer and fasting is a normal part of your life. Good, continue to practice this spiritual discipline, asking God to work in your life.

On the other hand, maybe you have never had periods of fasting before. This is more than just going on a diet. Fasting from food as a spiritual discipline has a different goal other than weight loss. It is designed so that concentrated times of prayer may be experienced. Fasting is a temporary physical demonstration that we believe what Christ tells us is true; “man shall not live by bread alone” (Matthew 4:4).

Some may wonder if fasting is something which Christians should practice in today's world. Jesus answers this question for us in Matthew 9:14-17. As you study this section and other related passages ask God to speak to you concerning what He would have you do. Fasting should always have a purpose behind it.

Blessings as you talk with God this week,
Pastor Ed

Read through Matthew 9:14-17 and answer the following questions.

1. How would you define the term fasting? What is involved when someone fasts?

What does the imagery of the wedding and bridegroom communicate to us concerning Jesus Christ?

Who is the bridegroom?

Who are the guests?

Who is the bride? Though we are not told in this passage, the bride is identified elsewhere in the bible. (Ephesians 5:25-27; Revelation 19:7)

What is the significance of the wedding guests mourning? Why are they sad? When is it that they will be sad?

What does this have to do with you as a follower of Christ?

Now answer the question “why didn’t Jesus’s disciples fast”?

Below is a list of passages concerning fasting in the Old and New Testaments. Look them up and identify the purpose for fasting.

As a sign of _____
Judges 20:26; Esther 4:3

As a sign of _____
Nehemiah 1:4-7; Daniel 9:3-14

A prayer for _____
2 Samuel 12:16-23

Reliance on God in times _____
Matthew 4:2;

As a result of the _____
Matthew 9:14-15

In preparation _____
Acts 9:9; 13:2-3

How should you make personal application of this short study on fasting? Is God asking you to do anything in particular?