

SWISS ARMY KNIFE

Week 5

SHARE

Have you ever fasted before? What was your experience like?

SEEK

Fasting

Fasting seems a lot like memorizing scripture...a lost art these days. Mostly because there are so many fad diets out there that it is hard not to begin with fasting and end with simply focusing on a weight loss strategy. But the scriptures consider fasting to be something completely different and so much more.

For starters, fasting is not about showing others how sad and spiritual you are. When it comes to fasting Jesus says in Matthew 6.16, "Do not look somber as the hypocrites do." Fasting is not about others seeing you and trying to gain piety points.

Secondly, fasting is for you and the Father. Verse 18 says that fasting should not be apparent to others (at least on your face and in your behavior; you might lose some weight though!), but it is obvious to God, and He will reward you. But just what exactly is the reward for fasting? Bad breath? Stomach aches?

First, what does fasting look like in the Bible? The Biblical view of fasting is often connected with repentance and lamenting. People who realized their sadness, guilt, or need to draw near to God would fast. They would usually give up eating food for various amounts of time, often giving up drinking any liquids. Many extracurricular activities were put away for a time and extra time in solitude, prayer, and scripture reading/reflection were increased.

The results are increased connection and sensitivity to God. People tend to be more "in tune" with God and His will in times of fasting, not to mention a greater connectivity with the poor. This is due to an increased dependence on God's strength and sustenance. There is a heightened awareness of literally living off the word of God. There is also an increased sensitivity to the lives of others and their wellbeing with God. I have personally noticed that people who spend time fasting are slower to anger, quicker to listen, wiser, and cut to the heart with discernment. In short, fasting makes us more Christ-like than imagined. This is not simply starving oneself and seeing how long you can go; rather, it is wholehearted dependence on the Father in the midst of not eating.

SEE

FASTING

“FASTING SEEMS A LOT LIKE MEMORIZING SCRIPTURE...A LOST ART THESE DAYS.” DO YOU AGREE WITH THIS QUOTE? WHY OR WHY NOT?

IF FASTING IS A BIBLICAL PRINCIPLE STILL IN EFFECT TODAY, WHY DO WE NOT SEE MORE PEOPLE FASTING?

HOW MIGHT BIBLICAL FASTING BE HIJACKED BY PRIDE? HOW CAN THIS BE AVOIDED? SEE MATTHEW 6.16.

BIBLICAL FASTING IS OFTEN CONFUSED AS A FAD DIET. SOME PEOPLE QUIT EATING AND PRAY A LOT WITH A SPECIFIC GOAL TO LOSE WEIGHT. WHY IS THIS NOT BIBLICAL FASTING?

Please take a few moments to pray with and for one another