When You Fast

Brent Moody · Matthew 6:16–18

INTRODUCTION

- It's not really about rules and laws. It's about discipleship. It's about being like Jesus, following him, trying to grow spiritually.
- It's a method of stopping everything else to focus on spiritual health. What is your plan for your spiritual health?

1 Jesus Says, When You Fast

Matthew 6:16–18; Matthew 9

- And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces, that their fasting may be seen by others.
- But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others, but by your father who is in secret.
- So we are in the middle of this period of time where he has left, and now it is the time for fasting, according to Matthew 9.
- He doesn't say, Thou shalt fast. So I don't think I can say you have to do it. It's a must. However, it is assumed.

2 What Is Fasting?

Daniel 1; Daniel 10; 1 Corinthians 7

- There are also fasts that are maybe restrictions from certain kinds of food. So Daniel does this a couple times.
- And then there is just the regular fast, which is just from food where you may drink various things.
- But the idea is kind of giving something up or sacrificing something for a period of time. And this is extremely common throughout the ancient world.

3 Fasting Is Fairly Frequent Within Scripture

1 Kings 21; Daniel 6; Luke 18

- Ahab is a horrible guy. And yet he recognizes what's happening in his life and he fasts.
- Darius is fasting when they throw Daniel in the lion's den.
- Luke 18, the Pharisee and the tax collector, he mentions how he is fasting twice per week.

4 Why Are They Doing This?

John 6

- One of the main ones was obviously confession and repentance.

- We are refraining from food, we're fasting so that we can feast on the things of God.
- The fact that we have to eat regularly should be a reminder of how dependent we are upon God.
- The primary goal is worship, honoring God, and openness to God's will.

5 It Exposes the Things That Control Us

Deuteronomy 8:2–5

- It exposes the things that control us. Testing reveals what is really inside. It reveals our heart.
- Man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.
- More than any other discipline, fasting reveals the things that control us.
- When you are hangry, that's revealing things about yourself. That's telling you who you really are and what you need to work on.

6 How Do We Do This? Start Small

- Like all the other ones, I think you have to start small.
- Let's do it for the right reason. Not for attention, not just for our health.
- Probably like missing a meal would be a good place to start, then maybe two meals, then like a whole day.
- Realize this is not a rule, it's not a way to prove your spirituality. It's not something that someone else should bind on you.

THE CHALLENGE

What am I doing to help my spiritual health? What kind of practices do I have weekly, yearly, that are going to benefit me and help me to grow and become more like Jesus?

MY NOTES