

Fast to Feast

I. INTRO

- A. Consider the Parable of the Sower
 - 1. 1st soil... doesn't understand
 - 2. 2nd soil... difficult times scorch
 - 3. 3rd soil... \$, cares, worries of the world choke it out
 - 4. 4th soil... fertile soil
- B. Consider the world we live in
 - 1. Culture of Confusion - constantly debating over what is true
 - 2. Culture of Distraction - hard to understand what you can't pay attention to
 - 3. Culture of Wimpiness / Lack of Perseverance - when the going gets tough, we run to our safe rooms, call our lawyers/mommies, and demand a trophy
 - 4. Culture of Instant Gratification - Eden w/ Spongebob in SE Asia
 - a) Netflix, Amazon, Walmart, Grocery stores
 - 5. What do we do about it? How do we fight against the culture? How do we prevent from becoming something we don't want to be
- C. We've been studying Spiritual Disciplines → God's means for spending time WITH Jesus and becoming LIKE Jesus.

II. The Battle is Real and Critical

- A. *1 John 3:2, Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because **we shall see him** as he is.*
- B. *2 Corinthians 3:18, And we all, with unveiled face, **beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image** from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. (ESV)*
- C. *Romans 12:1–2, [1] I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (ESV)*
- D. *Hebrews 12:1–2, [1] Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, [2] **looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith**, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (ESV)*
- E. We are designed to FIX our eyes and our affections in one direction
 - 1. This is why the Bible says that idolatry is adultery!
- F. The way we grow to look and act more and more like Jesus is by beholding him
- G. BUT WE HAVE A PROBLEM: (think back to the parable of the sower)
 - 1. We are a distracted people

2. We are an easily satisfied people (content with white bread instead of the Bread of Life)
 3. We are wimpy people who lack perseverance in suffering and silence
 - H. So far we have discussed the Word, Prayer, Silence, Worship, Transparency
 - I. Today: Fasting
- III. What is Fasting?
- A. Well, what's the opposite of fasting? Feasting!
 - B. Fasting is denying yourself something in the physical in order to FEAST on the Spiritual
 - C. This is a change from our everyday world where we naturally fast on the PHYSICAL while fasting on that which is SPIRITUAL and eternal
 - D. If you think about it, all spiritual disciplines are fasting on some level...
 - E. But there is also the specific discipline of fasting, which is most normally seen as not eating food for a designated period of time in order to seek God
 - F. Consider some of the examples of fasting in the Bible
 1. Moses (Exodus 34:28)
 - a) What he gave up: Food and water for 40 days while on Mount Sinai.
 - b) Why he fasted: To seek God's presence and receive the Ten Commandments.
 - c) What God gave him: Divine revelation and the Law for Israel.
 2. Elijah (1 Kings 19:4-8)
 - a) What he gave up: Regular food, surviving on angel-provided sustenance for 40 days.
 - b) Why he fasted: Fleeing Queen Jezebel, he fasted out of despair and spiritual exhaustion.
 - c) What God gave him: Strength to travel to Mount Horeb, where he encountered God's presence.
 3. Daniel (Daniel 10:2-3)
 - a) What he gave up: Rich foods, meat, and wine for 21 days.
 - b) Why he fasted: (1) Holiness – not wanting to eat foods sacrificed to idols or that which was unclean; (2) Later he fasted to seek understanding and pray for Israel's future.
 - c) What God gave him: (1) Victory (2) A vision of future events and assurance of divine intervention.
 4. Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11)
 - a) What he gave up: Food for 40 days in the wilderness.
 - b) Why he fasted: To prepare for His ministry and resist Satan's temptations.
 - c) What God gave him: Strength to overcome temptation and the power of the Spirit for His mission.
 - G. Why did they fast? Simply stated, to FIX their eyes on God!
 1. Undistracted
 2. Despite the suffering of hunger

3. Seeking spiritual satisfaction over physical satisfaction

IV. Why Should You Fast?

A. *Luke 5:33–35, [33] And they said to him, “The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink.” [34] And Jesus said to them, “Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? [35] The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.” (ESV)*

1. Don't overthink this
2. If we were made to FIX our eyes on the author of life and FEAST on his glory, how could they fast when he was across the table?
3. But when he is gone, they will fast the WHITE BREAD OF THE WORLD (as Piper says) to FEAST at the BANQUET TABLE OF GOD
4. You won't fast in glory b/c you will feast at the wedding of the Lamb
5. But when we fatten ourselves on the stuff of the world (food, money, possessions, pleasures, etc), then we don't care for his glory
6. We have had our fill
7. Why do you fast? Fasting intentionally says NO to the world because I want MORE of God

8. That's the first reason: to see the glory of God (and it's a great reason)

B. Second reason: To Reveal Your Sins and Idols

1. Fasting strips away distractions and exposes what you truly rely on for comfort, security, and satisfaction.
2. When you feel cravings, it reveals where your heart naturally turns—whether to food, entertainment, approval, or other dependencies.
3. Like an idol detector, fasting helps identify sins of self-indulgence, pride, impatience, or lack of trust in God.
4. It provides an opportunity for repentance and re-centering your heart on God instead of lesser things.
5. Example: The Israelites' fasting often led to confession of sin (Nehemiah 9:1-2, Daniel 9:3-5).
6. What do you NOT want to fast? Probably consider starting there
7. Embrace the quiet, flee the noise, drop your phone
 - a) Allow the Holy Spirit to churn up the murky waters and show you what lies beneath in your own heart

C. Third reason: To Remind Yourself What Is Truly Important

1. *Matthew 4:4 – Jesus, in the wilderness, says, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”*
 - a) Fasting teaches dependence on God's Word, not just physical sustenance.
2. *John 4:34 – Jesus tells His disciples, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to accomplish His work.”*
 - a) Spiritual nourishment is found in obedience to God.
3. *Matthew 5:6 – “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”*

- a) Fasting shifts our hunger from earthly things to righteousness, reminding us that true satisfaction comes from God alone.

D. Fourth reason: To Train in Suffering

- 1. Fasting strengthens self-discipline and endurance, preparing you to endure trials with faith.
 - 2. It teaches you to say “no” to immediate gratification, which applies to resisting sin and persevering through hardship.
 - 3. Suffering in fasting is a small way to share in Christ’s sufferings (Philippians 3:10) and cultivate a heart that trusts God in all circumstances.
 - 4. It builds reliance on God’s strength rather than personal comfort.
 - 5. Example: Believers in China
- E. So why fast?
- 1. Fasting **FIXES our eyes on the Glorious One** that we might FEAST on his glory
 - 2. Fasting **reveals idols**, exposing sin for repentance and freedom
 - 3. It **refocuses priorities**, reminding us that true fulfillment is found in God.
 - 4. It **trains us in suffering**, helping us grow in endurance, faith, and self-control.
 - 5. **I think fasting helps the soil of your heart to be more fertile to the Spirit and the Word...**
 - 6. If you don’t fast... if you refuse to fast... if you’ve never fasted... hmm

V. How Should You Fast?

- A. Pick what you are going to fast, determine how long, etc
- B. All that stuff is on the back of your lyric sheet
- C. Fast TO Feast
- D. Think about how long it took to prepare food if you were a regular person in the year 50 AD. I did some research...
 - 1. Grinding Grains (1-2 hours daily)
 - a) Many people ground their own grain using hand mills or mortar and pestle to make flour.
 - 2. Fetching Water & Fuel (1-2 hours daily)
 - a) Water had to be collected from wells, rivers, or public fountains.
 - b) Gathering wood for fire
 - 3. Preparing Ingredients (1-2 hours daily)
 - a) Vegetables had to be cleaned, peeled, and chopped.
 - b) Meat needed to be butchered or preserved (e.g., salting, drying, or smoking).
 - c) Dairy products, like cheese or butter, were homemade.
 - 4. Cooking Time (1-3 hours daily)
 - a) Cooking was slow due to open fires, clay ovens, or rudimentary stoves.
 - b) Bread, a staple food, took a long time to bake.
 - c) Stews and roasted meats required hours over the fire.

5. Cleaning & Maintenance (0.5-1 hour daily)
 - a) Washing dishes and utensils with sand or ash.
 - b) Cleaning the cooking area, which could be smoky and dirty.
 6. Estimated time: 6 hours a day to PREPARE food
 7. Sacrificing all that to FAST and PRAY
- E. Some tips:
1. Don't just keep busy...
 2. This isn't paganism... this isn't paying your lbs of flesh
 3. We fast TO feast
 4. If you don't eat AND you don't seek the Lord with that time, that's not helpful – that's just ritual
 5. Engage your heart, engage your soul, seek the Lord
- F. *Acts 13:1–3, [1] Now there were in the church at Antioch prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen a lifelong friend of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. [2] While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." [3] Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.*
1. What are they doing? Fasting and feasting...
 2. What happens? The Holy spirit shows up... he gives direction... he calls them to a work...
 3. How do they respond? They fast and pray some more, confirming and testing these leadings in accordance with the Scripture, and they commission them like Jesus did to the Apostles and send them off
 4. I want to be a part of a church like that...
 5. I want to LEAD a church like that...
 6. Can we become a people who fast, worship, and seek the Lord together and apart?