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Spiritual Disciplines: Fasting

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**HANDOUT NOTES**

* **Spiritual Disciplines Check In**

The spiritual disciplines are practices we find in holy Scripture that honor God in our doing and promote spiritual growth in the gospel of Jesus Christ among believers. They are practices or habits that Christians prioritize because it aids us to cling more to Christ and grow in Christlikeness.

**1 Timothy 4:7** (NASB) … discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness

Disciplines are practices. Spiritual disciplines are things you do.

* **What Is the Spiritual Discipline of Fasting?**

Fasting is a voluntarily going without food for a determined time for the sake of some spiritual purpose.

Jesus doesn’t say “if” but “when you fast” (**Matthew 6:16**). And He doesn’t say His followers *might* fast, but “they will” (**Matthew 9:15**).

* **Examples of Fasting in Scripture**

**Matthew 4:2** … after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry.

**Daniel 1:12** [fasted] “... for ten days; only having vegetables to eat and water to drink.”

**Esther 4:16** “Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf, and do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my young women will also fast as you do ...”

**Acts 9:9** …for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

**Deuteronomy 9:9** “When I went up the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the Lord made with you, I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water.”

* **What Fasting Is**
* **Fasting is a mode of surrender during a time of request to the Lord**
* **Fasting is a hunger for God**

**Matthew 4:1-4** Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. And after fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. And the tempter came and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.” But he answered, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.’”

**Psalm 63:1–5** O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.

My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips

* **Fasting is a great way to focus on the leadership of God**

**Acts 14:19-23** But Jews came from Antioch and Iconium, and having persuaded the crowds, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. But when the disciples gathered about him, he rose up and entered the city, and on the next day he went on with Barnabas to Derbe. When they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God. And when they had appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom they had believed.

**Psalm 46:10** “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

* **What Fasting Is Not**
* **Fasting is not something we do for prideful gain or glory**

**Matthew 6:16-18** “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 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. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.”

**Psalm 35:13** (KJV) ... I humbled my soul with fasting ...

* **Fasting is not a way to power-pack your prayers in order to convince God to do something**
* **Practice Fasting**
* **What and when**

The first thing is to simply commit to what we will do and for how long.

Most fast are from all food and people only drink water for basic daily sustaining.

When you are hungry or during times of your day when you would normally eat you go to prayer. You let the hunger draw you to the Lord!

* **Who**

Fasting is something you can do alone or in a group.