

Fasting

A practice to free you from compulsion and instant gratification and turn your attention towards God and his Kingdom.

Matthew 6:16-18 – “When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Fasting is voluntarily going without food, or any other regularly enjoyed, good gift from God, for the sake of some spiritual purpose. It is markedly counter-cultural in our consumerist society.

Choose what to fast from. The most common and biblical fast was from food, but you can fast from many things such as television or the number of words you speak. Often times, it is helpful to fast from things that have an unhealthy grip on your life. Whatever you choose, start small. If it's food, start with a single meal. If it is TV, start with one evening. You can lengthen the fasts as you become more familiar with the practice.

Consider what positive thing you might do with the time and energy that would have gone towards what you are fasting from. Christian fasting is not only about refraining from something, it's about redirecting our energy towards God and his kingdom ways.

When you become aware of your fast (missing a meal, a growling stomach, or an irritation because you can't watch your favorite show), allow that to be a reminder to turn your attention to the purpose for which you are fasting. If it is prayer, pray. If it is surrender, surrender afresh in the moment. Remember, we are depriving ourselves of lesser things so we can turn our attention towards something greater.