

PART IX: Fasting



Fecha

@March 13, 2024

LAST WEEK'S PRACTICE.

Last week's practice was to post the letter we had made in the group, in a visible place, maybe next to the calendars (and finish it if you had not finished it in the group). And every day before going to bed, read this letter, as a reminder of what God wants to do in your life during 2024, or use it as a beginning in your moments of prayer, asking the Holy Spirit for help to work in you every day

- How did having this letter help you?
- How could you continue to use this letter to continue encouraging yourself in your training to be an apprentice of Jesus?
- If you could see your life five or ten years down the road, based on your habits today, would you like the man or woman you would be becoming?

SUMMARY.

Jesus said: prepare yourselves, strive to enter through the narrow gate, through the only way that is Jesus: I Am The Way. The world offers many options, and that is why we need the practice of fasting; because it helps me to be oriented towards the will of God, to recognize what is and what is not from Him. Therefore, it must be a constant practice in our apprenticing to Jesus

SUNDAY'S TEACHING.

- What did the Holy Spirit speak to you about Sunday's teaching?

Luke 4:1-2

- What stands out to you most about this passage?
- Why do you think the Holy Spirit himself would lead Jesus into the desert to fast?

- What does the fact that Jesus fasted tell you about the importance of this practice?

THIS WEEK'S PRACTICE.

Tonight, we are going to take some time to talk about how we can participate in these 3 days of prayer and fasting together with the entire church, which begins tomorrow, and we will end together on Saturday. The specific way everyone makes the decision to help may be different, and that's okay. So take two important things into account; **1) your stage of apprenticing to Jesus** (if it is the first time you are going to fast, or if you already do it constantly. Start where you are) and **2) your stage of life** (fasting is going to be different for a 10-year-old child years, a teen, a mother, or someone who works physically)

There are two things we are going to be choosing:

1. Fasting: not eating
2. Abstain: from other things that are not food but are distractions

First, we are going to read a passage in Exodus aloud, and then write what you think the Holy Spirit wants to say to you through this passage, to your life

- Read Exodus 5:3
- Now take a few minutes to write down what you believe the Holy Spirit is telling you through this passage

Now, you are going to imagine that you are in our night of worship on December 31, 2024. And you are writing a letter to yourself, in "the past," to your "self," which is on March 6, 2024. And you are going to tell him/her how your life is now and how much it was worth making the effort to be with Jesus, to become like Jesus, and to do what Jesus did

- If you have never fasted, consider starting by fasting one meal a day (breakfast, lunch, or dinner) and dedicating that time to prayer. Just make sure it is a time where you will be able to pray and read the Bible

- If fasting is more of a regular rhythm for you, consider fasting for 24 hours (tonight through Thursday night, or Thursday night through Friday night) and then supplementing it with a meal on Friday (no eating) , and breakfast on Saturday (together at church)
- Or you can also choose two times during the day where you are not going to eat (breakfast and dinner)
- For the little ones, it can be dinner every night (or eating something very minimal) and that time, as a family, sing, pray, and read the Bible (or if you are teen or young adult, going to church)
- Remember that it is not about trying very hard, because we are not gaining or proving anything. It's about training hard, to get closer to God. Start where you know you are
 - Lastly, if you are with your family here in the group, we recommend that you do this step together so that you can do it as a family and support each other in doing it together

Take a few minutes to write down what you are going to do

Now, you are going to choose something that you are going to abstain from to accompany the fast. We refrain from things that are neutral but that steal our attention and time. For example, television, social media, shopping, sugar, coffee, sports, movies/series, sleeping late, listening to a lot of content such as music and preaching (and not giving space for the Holy Spirit himself to speak to you), etc

- The best way to make the decision is to think about your days and answer the question, what steals my time and attention the most?
- You can do this step individually, or as a family, if there is something that everyone is going to abstain from together. Do not force or insinuate to your children (unless they are small and need your help) or spouse to do something that you think he/she should do. Let the Holy Spirit do that work. You can abstain from something as a family, and from something else individually

Take a few minutes to write down what you are going to do

Finally, we have some recommendations to help you in these three days

- We will be having two times as a church to meet and help you in this practice. On Thursday at 7 pm via ZOOM and on Saturday, physically, at 9 am in the church
- It is normal for it to be a practice in which “you don't feel good.” You may feel more irritable or angry than normal. It is something that The Holy Spirit is showing is within you
- Have a notebook or journal where you can write what you believe the Holy Spirit is speaking to you. Through the Bible, in prayer, or even through circumstances. For example: I'm realizing that when I don't eat I keep a bad temper. That you want to show me Holy Spirit with this
- The success of this practice is not whether you experienced or felt something (although it may happen). The success of this practice is the simple fact of presenting our bodies to God as living sacrifices of worship; and leave aside good things, like food or watching a movie, to seek the best, get closer to God
- This practice is not only for adults. Don't leave your family forgotten in search of “being more spiritual.” Guide your family even if it suddenly means you have to go slower than you want

THIS WEEK'S PRACTICE.

The practice of the week is fasting. That's all. Present our bodies and our entire being by making a single prayer; God, I want more from you