

MARCH 26

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE:

Fasting - Fasting is giving up control, trusting in God. As we learn to say no to food for a time, we train ourselves to say no to our desires so we can live for God.

PRACTICE:

Set a Fast time that is appropriate for you, from 12-24 hours. Your time should be a slight challenge, but not overwhelming. The goal is not to skip food, but to focus on God. Learning the discipline of saying no to a desire we have helps to train our bodies to say no to sin or temptation in our lives. Fasting also reminds us to focus our entire day on God, and to look to God to provide for our needs and desires.

TIPS:

- Begin your fast with a prayer. "God, I am aware I can not live without food. Ultimately, however, I know I cannot live without you. Teach me over this fast to trust you for my survival, and not my own ability."
- Go about your normal day, do your normal routines. You're not escaping the world to spend time with God, you are inviting God into the places where you always reside.
- Meditate on self-denial. What is in your life that you need to deny or put away so you can focus on God?
- Bring your Bible and a journal. Spend time in scripture and journal your thoughts to God.
- Read and meditate on Isaiah 58. What is God trying to teach you?
- Bring your desires to God. Ask God if your desires align with God's will for your life. Be still and listen.
- Listen or pay attention to a "nudge" from God.
- Sometimes we assume something "great" must happen when we fast. There is power, however, in simply being faithful to God.

GUIDELINES:

- Some people, for medical reasons, can not fast from food. In these situations, find something else to fast from for the same purpose.
- Stay hydrated. Drink lots of fluids.
- Don't fast if you are sick, pregnant, nursing, or have some other medical reason.
- You could fast by eating an early breakfast and a late dinner, and simply fast in-between. Or start a fast after dinner one night, and end the fast with dinner the following night. You might still fast for 24 hours, but only miss two regular meals.
- Don't break your fast with a big meal or a greasy meal.

(March 26th cont.)

PRAYER:

God, our desire is to be fully committed to you. We want to honor you in the way that we live, in the way that we speak, and in the way that we conduct ourselves with those we come into contact with each day. While we desire to be like you, we also realize that our sinful nature at times gravitates toward our own selfish and wicked desires. Please help us to put to death those things which are not of you: anger, rage, malice, slander, wicked thoughts, and words that are untrue. Help us learn to say no to our own desires, so we can live more fully for you. Amen

