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SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Prayer and Fasting

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[TITLE SLIDE:]

All **SUCCESSFUL** men and women are highly Disciplined

All **UNSUCCESSFUL** men and women are Undisciplined and unable to control their behaviors and their appetites

- Jesus walked this earth complete Successes
- God wants You and I to be successful too



[Romans 8.29a NIV]

For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son

- There are DISCIPLINES that benefit and mature our Spiritual Lives

Those Discipline help us to....



[Titus 2.11-13 NIV]

... live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Paul wrote to Church in Philippi (Philippians) while in Prison



[Philippians 2.12-13 NLT]

...you always followed my instructions when I was with you. And now that I am away, it is even more important. Work hard to show the results of your salvation (...work out your salvation with fear and trembling), obeying God with deep reverence and fear. 13 For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

- Jesus is our Salvation.... NOT WORKS!
- Yet, we live in a Fallen world
 - There is a continuous pull that seeks to derail God's work in you
 - Enemy has plans to wreck your spiritual life

- Some may say...

"That is religion, I'm NOT a religious person... I'm about relationship"

- **If by Religion you mean...**

- Set of things you do to make God love you...
- Set of practices to get you to heaven...

THAT IS A BAD THING!
RELIGION CANNOT SAVE US!

- **BUT when Religion is a RESPONSE to the grace of God...**

THEN IT IS A GOOD THING!

Today we'll talk about 2 DISCIPLINES God's given us to be like Jesus...

PRAYER & FASTING

- What is Prayer and Fasting?.... Start with Prayer

THIS IS A QUICK OVERVIEW....



PRAYER

Prayer is the practice of the presence of God....



It's Talking with God

- It's NOT meditation or thinking about.... it's Talking with God!
- It's fellowship with God... believing God is listening
- Prayer can be Audible or Silent / Private or Public

What do we TALK about??.....

- God wants us to talk with Him about **EVERYTHING!!!**
 - Share our Emotions and Desires / We Worship Him in Prayer
 - We pray to Praise God and Thank Him
 - Tell Him how much we love Him
 - Tell Him what's going on in our lives

We pray...

- For Guidance // Disciples asked Who, What, Where
- Ask for Wisdom // God's will in a matter
- Requests // Protection / Deliverance (it's our way of defeating satan) / Healing / Miracles / Needs / Salvations

David **"...a man after His own heart."** WHY???

- David's heart was for God and the things of God.....
It was Revealed through his PRAYER!!
- David was a man of Prayer.... always talking to God
- Would Pour out his heart... fears and anger
- Asked God's Help and Wisdom in every circumstance
- David Repented

How often should we TALK with God / PRAY??.....

- 1 Thessalonians 5.17 says to **"Pray without ceasing"**
- Keep a running conversation going with God all day long.

.....Prayer develops our relationship with God

God loves this exchange with His children / just as we love the exchange with ours

- Fellowship with God is the heart of prayer
- It's Drawing Near to God

- Often we lose sight of how simple prayer is supposed to be

Jesus did it continuously!

- Disciples saw this and ASK Jesus to TEACH them to Pray

THERE IS SO MUCH TO PRAYER

- Prayer is referenced over 600 times in the Bible
 - It's our way of defeating satan and his army
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Prayer is ONE of the GREATEST Spiritual Disciplines

SECOND DISCIPLINE..... THIS IS A QUICK OVERVIEW....



FASTING

Like Prayer, Fasting is a SPIRITUAL exercise

QUOTE: Jack Hayford

*The Word of God makes it clear that fasting is an **instrument of spiritual power**, a key by which bonds of evil are broken and God's counsels are received and established in the affairs of man.*

- The devil and demons are exercising their will on this earth...
- GOD wants His Will and Rule to have dominion on earth



Prayer Joined with Fasting Advances God's Will

- We don't know exactly why Fasting with Prayer is so powerful.
- But, the Bible makes clear that Fasting is Effective and Important,
- AND... Jesus instructed it to be part of His Church's life.

What is Fasting??

- **Usually**, Fasting is the abstaining of food for a certain period of time.
- Replaced with special prayer and waiting upon God.
- The idea of a fast is seeking God.

There are different categories of fasting in the Bible

- **No Food or Drink (just Water)** for set period of time

STORY: Moses fasted 40 days before receiving 10 Commandments

STORY: Jesus fasted 40 days before launching out in Ministry

- **Partial Fast** / Fasting certain foods

STORY: Daniel Fasted good 3 weeks for an Answer to Prayer / Vision
Only fruits and vegetables and water

- **Fast Activities** / Paul spoke of Husbands and wives set time from sex
/ TV or Social Media / might be golfing /

Reasons for Fasting

- **Demolishing Enemy Strongholds**

STORY: Mark 9 / Boy possessed by evil spirit

Disciples could not cast out even though they did before

[Mark 9.29b NKJV] *"...This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting."*

STORY: Mother fasting for son's addiction

STORY: Salvation for others!!

- For Direction or Wisdom from God

STORY: Church Elders in Antioch Fasted Before Sending out Missionaries

- Safety and Protection

STORY: Esther Fasted for the Safety of the Jews

STORY: David Hogan's Team & Family / Missionaries

- Repentance & Drawing Closer to God

STORY: Whole city of Nineveh fasted and prayed for God Forgiveness

STORY: "Sue" felt in Spiritual Desert / 2 Chronicles, where Hezekiah, the priest,
16 days to cleared out Temple of idol worship

**Fasting is a seeking after God's heart,
All other blessings and benefits being secondary to God Himself**



[TITLE SLIDE]

How Often and When should I Fast?

- 1 to 40 days (Be wise)
- Every meal or just certain meals
- Maybe once a week
- Corporate Call to Fast (we will at times / City wide Marriage)
- Every time you need Direction or Understanding
- Pray and ask Holy Spirit what and how long

Jimmy Play Music

THESE ARE NOT LAWS.... These are guidelines

1. Do not fast if there are medical or dietary reasons prohibiting it.
2. Always drink plenty of water while fasting, it washes out physical impurities released into your system by the fast.
3. Those who for any reason are unable to participate in going without food, Fast certain Activities. Disciplined times of prayer beyond their usual pattern
4. Give special times of prayer, praise and intercession. Perhaps five-minute "prayer-breaks" or an entire lunchtime, to be given to the Lord in prayer.
5. Spend time in Scripture and Worship / You're really devoting your time and your thoughts and everything to the Lord.
6. Call up and Pray with Brothers or Sisters in Christ. Their partnership becomes a strong bond of fellowship in a fast.

FASTING is a SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE (Tool) for us to be aligned with God's will

CLOSE: PRAYER - There will be a time Church Fast for upcoming Events