

the IRRELIGIOUS LIFE

experiencing the inside-out spirituality of Jesus

Week 11: *FEEDING OUR SPIRITS*

INTRODUCTION –Using Our Body To Aid Our Spirit

Matthew 6:16-18; John 4:34; 6:27

Dallas Willard ~ A discipline is something in my power that enables me to do what I cannot do by _____ effort.

Joshua 1:8;
Matthew 26:41; Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 12:1

JESUS SCENE – Weakness Turned To Strength

Matthew 4:1-11

Romans 7:15

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE #11 – Fasting

The purpose of fasting is to teach you how to be _____
and _____ when you don't get what you want.

1 Corinthians 1:24-27

Fasting doesn't focus _____ attention;
it focuses _____ attention.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS ON FASTING:

1. Start small and build from there. Try skipping one or two meals or fasting for 24 hours before moving on to longer fasts.
2. Make appropriate plans and family arrangements.
3. Eat light meals before and after a fast. Avoid trying to "stock up" before fasting.
4. Drink lots of water. You may also want to drink fruit juice or herbal teas.
5. Consider a consistent pattern of fasting over weeks or months.
6. You may experience headaches, fatigue, or increased irritability. Do not be discouraged—these will normally pass.
7. Find something to do at mealtimes—this is often a good time to practice scripture reading, prayer, or meditation.
8. Use times of fasting to increase identification with the poor. You may wish to give away the money you would have spent on food.
9. Share your fast with those who need to know. Don't be overly concerned about keeping it "secret".
10. Talk with God about your experience of fasting throughout the day.

Matthew 12:20 / Isaiah 42:1-4

CONCLUSION – A Means To An End

Luke 18:9-14

HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS...

WARMING UP...

1. What, if anything, has been your experience with fasting? Talk about it.
2. Discuss your reaction to this quote by Dallas Willard: *God's intent for each of us is that we should grow in character and ability to the point where he can empower us to do what we want to do. The work we must do now is to train our "wanter."*
3. After briefly reviewing this week's message, share one thing that most challenged, convicted, or encouraged you.

LOOK TO THE BOOK...

4. Read again about Jesus' temptation from the devil in **Matthew 4:1-11**. a) What verse stands out to you the most? Why? b) Jesus was led "by the Spirit" into a situation that was hard and challenging and filled with spiritual struggle. What lesson can we draw from this for our lives? c) What do you think Jesus means by his reaction to the Devil in **verse 4**? What evidence does Jesus give of this being true in his own life? d) Look at Jesus' reaction to the second temptation (**verse 7**). This seems to suggest that just because God has the power to do a miracle doesn't mean we should try to manipulate him into action. We must never relate to God based on how he can serve our agenda, but how we can serve his. How might this function as a rebuke to some Christian teaching today about miracles and prosperity?
5. How does **Matthew 9:14-17** illustrate the principle of precision without legalism? Do you think you get this important aspect of the Jesus hermeneutic?
6. Read **Isaiah 58**. a) What was the Israelite's attitude in their fasting? b) In what ways might we display the same attitude in our churches today, regarding fasting or any other spiritual matter? c) What is God's way of fasting? d) List as many benefits as you can find in this passage of fasting God's way.

SO WHAT?...

7. At this point, how do you see yourself incorporating fasting into your life? If you're up for it, plan to fast together this week. Choose what days and for how long and in what manner you are going to fast and decide to debrief about your experiences at next week's Home Church. Remember that fasting is a training ground to help you cultivate discipline for when you are really under fire.

Bruxy Cavey @ THE MEETING HOUSE – Sunday, April 2 / 9, 2006