



5 Reasons Fasting Will Change Your Life | Doug Wekenman | 11.14.21
Weekly Study

S T A R T

To get things started, go around the circle and answer the following questions:

If you could travel anywhere this week, where would you go?

S H A R E

Welcome back to Group! This week, Doug continues our series, “Five Reasons” by challenging us to experience the beauty in fasting: soul realignment, resisting temptation, rest, readiness, and eventual joy. Before we dive in, take some time to check in with your Group by answering these questions.

What is one thing in your life you believe God is calling you to lay down or fast, so that you may experience and access more of Him?

How do you believe fasting will change your life this week?

What was the most challenging part of your week?

What was the highlight of your week?

G R O W

Matthew 26:40-43

What does this passage tell you about how powerful praying and waiting is?

Jesus says, “Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation” What temptation do you think he was referring to?

In this passage, Jesus and his disciples were in Gethsemane, where Jesus had told them to wait while he went away to pray to the Father. At this point, Roman soldiers were searching for Jesus only to arrest him. Jesus knew how important it was to pray, especially in his time of need. The weight of the event that was about to take place was heavy, and Jesus knew he needed a kind of strength only God can provide.

This week we are talking about fasting. Fasting is simply withholding from something we normally have so that we can set our attention on God. It’s a very common practice in Scripture. Men and women of God frequently abstain from something (usually food) to focus on God. The problem is, humans are prone to seek out comfort, and the more comfortable we are, the less we rely on God. We fast to voluntarily give up some of that comfort, to remind our souls to rely on God.

While Jesus went away to spend time in prayer to God, He asked his disciples to keep watch and pray. It was very late in the night as the Roman soldiers were hunting down Jesus and his disciples. But when Jesus came back from praying, he found his disciples asleep. Jesus says in Matthew 26:40-41, “Couldn’t you men keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Jesus was so adamant that the disciples stayed awake and prayed because when we rely on God for what we need instead of our flesh, we can be alert and strong against the enemy. We can hear his voice and respond with the strength and clarity that only comes from God. When we rely only on our flesh, we become unaware and unprepared when the enemy comes to attack. Jesus encourages us to fast so that we rely not on our own strength but on the strength that he provides.

What is something that you would consider fasting from?

Is there something you are praying to God about this week or this month that you could fast and spend time in prayer with God for?

MOVE

Read Mark 9:14-29

What sticks out to you in this passage?

What are your first few thoughts when you think of fasting?

Out of all the spiritual disciplines, fasting is one of the most difficult for many followers of Christ. In our culture, it's easy to get caught up in the pressures of the world to keep up in the rat race of accumulating success. But that's not the Truth. God did not design us to work 24/7. As humans, we were created to need some real rest. And as Doug said this weekend, fasting is one of the best ways to do that.

Is God calling you to fast from something? Typically, skipping a meal is one of the best ways to do this, but it's not the only way. Fasting from your phone, the news, or anything else that tends to steal the attention from God, fast from that. During your fast, each time you would think of that particular thing you are fasting from, replace it with prayer and in the Bible.

Out of all of the reasons that fasting will change your life: Soul realignment, resisting temptation, rest, readiness, and eventual joy, which one are you needing the most right now?

Can you challenge yourself and others in your group to fast from your phones for two hours this week?

P R A Y

We need prayer now more than ever. Spend some time-sharing prayer requests. If you are in a coed group, consider breaking off into two separate groups (or calls if you are an online group) to share more freely.

T O G O

"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." - Matthew 26:41