

Spir·it·ed

Is Life Too Full to Live Life to the Fullest?

Matthew 4:1-11

Message Reflection Guide

If we're physically able, fasting can teach us the importance of our spiritual food. As Jesus said, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). Yet, as I learned firsthand, fasting on its own doesn't necessarily draw us closer to God!

In fact, God once told His people through the prophet Zechariah that their practice of fasting was useless since it wasn't leading to service for the poor. **"Was it really for me that you fasted?"** God asked pointedly (Zechariah 7:5).

God's question revealed that the primary problem wasn't their stomachs; it was their cold hearts. By continuing to serve themselves, they were failing to draw closer to God's heart. So He urged them, "Administer true justice; show mercy and compassion to one another. Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor" (vv. 9-10). Our goal in any spiritual discipline is to draw closer to Jesus. As we grow in likeness to Him, we'll gain a heart for those He loves. - Tim Gustafson

CONVERSATION STARTER

As Jesus was tempted in the wilderness what does that tell you about His humanity?

GETTING INTO THE SCRIPTURES – Read Matthew 4:1-11

On Sunday Pastor Jason said Fasting can help redirect your earthly passions to eternal passions. What do you like to do for fun? How can that hobby be used as a witness for the Gospel? What have fasted from in the past? How did fasting draw you closer to God?

Fasting helps you examine your dependencies. Read Deuteronomy 8:1-3 What are some unhealthy dependencies in your life? How do they distract you from God? If depending on God is the best choice, why do we tend to choose other things?

Fasting helps you examine your devotion. Read Mark 12:30 We are admonished by Jesus to love the Lord with all our heart soul and mind. What does that look like for you? What can distract you from being devoted to God?

Fasting helps you examine your desires. (motives) Read Exodus 23:25 How often do you find yourself being confused about what your needs and wants are? What do your wants reveal about what your heart truly desires?

CHALLENGE

As you think about your earthly passions, can you identify some things that may be distracting you from seeking God? What would it look like for you to fast from those distractions and how would you seek God during that fast?