

Feb 01, 2015



Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

Lesson Leaders:
James Haymon
Jose Cisneros

Class Leaders:
Inreach: Pat Hester
Outreach: Joyce Kirkland
Secretary: Mary Clark
Deacon: C M Hester

Feasting and Fasting Dan 1:5, 8-17; Matt 6:16-18

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson examines **Feasting and Fasting**. The **study's aim** is to understand the difference between indulging ourselves and denying ourselves as well as to recognize how an indulging mentality hurts our spiritual life. The **study's application** is to limit or deny ourselves some things so that we can devote more time to important spiritual matters.
(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

The first part of our lesson comes from Daniel 1. The year was 605 BC, and Daniel and others had been taken from Jerusalem to Babylon as hostages by King Nebuchadnezzar. To the Babylonians, having the best and brightest (Daniel 1:4) as hostages would weaken the resolve in Judah to rebel, and the captives would be taught to respect the power of Babylon. Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, evidently had decided to surrender rather than resist, and the subjugation was symbolized by royal captives being taken to Babylon (2 Kings 24:1; 2 Chronicles 36:5-7; Daniel 1:3). After making the 900-mile trip, some captives were selected to be immersed in Babylonian culture. This involved a three-year program in receiving the best education that Babylon could provide (Daniel 1:3-5). The indoctrination undoubtedly included being taught Babylonian literature, history, mathematics, astronomy, and religion. Would the Hebrew captives remain true to their religious convictions in the process, or would they compromise those beliefs? Daniel and his three friends chose their battles wisely in this regard, one of which involved dietary choices.
(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

There are a lot of different ideas out there about what it is and why you should do it. So I thought it would be good for us to take a look first at what the Bible says about fasting itself. Fasting means to give up something that you normally enjoy. Usually it refers to skipping one or more meals, or limiting the kinds of food you eat. Now, unfortunately, we are probably all too familiar with this concept of passing up food. But here in America, we call that dieting, not fasting. Really, the idea isn't much different. Fasting from food simply means not eating what you'd normally eat when you'd normally eat it. It might last part of a day, all day or several days. It might mean abstaining from all food and water, or just certain foods or beverages. Sometimes the word "fasting" is used in the Bible of missing a meal because you simply don't have a choice. For example, some people don't eat more because they're poor and they can't afford it. Sometimes people stop eating because they just don't feel like eating. That's especially true when people are weighed down by some tragedy or anxiety. They are so sad or so worried or so upset that they simply forget to eat. Food is not the most important thing on their mind, because they are completely preoccupied with a huge problem. I bet you've experienced that. Have you ever been so troubled by something that you felt sick to your stomach? Or, so focused on a problem that you lost your appetite? That is the kind of fasting most frequently mentioned in the Bible: people so preoccupied with problems that they just didn't think about eating. Compared to whatever they were worried about, food was unimportant.
(Adapted from the series: Kingdom Worship (Matthew 6:1-18) by Chip Bell)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
By living for ourselves we die; by dying to ourselves we live. Lent is a period of 40 days prior to Easter (excluding Sundays). For many people it commemorates Jesus' fasting in the wilderness. They "give up something" for Lent every year, like sweets or TV. This can yield spiritual benefits, but denying yourself things and denying yourself aren't the same.

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
Follow Christ we must let go, Of all that we hold dear; And as we do deny ourselves, Our gains become more clear. —Sper

SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. (Luke 9:23 NKJV)
(From "Our Daily Bread", Feb 25, 2001)

Series: ACTS OF WORSHIP

UNIT: Stewardship for Life

NEXT WEEK

**SERVING NEIGHBORS,
SERVING GOD
(Luke 10:25-34)**

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

FEASTING CONVICTIONS ABOUT FAITHFULNESS TO GOD (DAN 1:8-13)

Faithful to God through being purposed in our hearts (8)

Purposed in our hearts that God is holy and good (Josh 24:19-22)

Purposed in our hearts that God is right and all His ways are just (Dan 4:31-37)

Purposed in our hearts about God because it should be desirable and the right choice (Josh 24:15)

Purposed in our hearts that God is the only one who has eternal life (John 6:66-69)

Purposed in our hearts that God has delivered and will continue to deliver from deadly peril (2 Cor 1:8-10)

Purposed in our hearts about God because those who endure will reign with Him (2 Tim 2:12)

Purposed in our hearts about God because to stay steadfast brings rewards from God (Rev 3:9-13)

Faithful to God in spite of resistance (9-10)

Resistance where God helps the powerless against the mighty (2 Chron 14:9-12)

Resistance that cannot be overcome by strength and size (Ps 33:16-19)

Resistance that may seem to be overbearing, but reliance on God will always bring deliverance (2 Cor 1:8-10)

Resistance by people who have been captivated by Satan (2 Tim 2:24-26)

I should expect frustrations and resistance and therefore test all things by the Holy Spirit (1 John 4:1-3)

Always be prepared to face resistance (Luke 10:3)

Faithful to God through testing (11-13)

Testing to bring out humility (Deut 8:2)

Testing to determine love (Deut 13:3)

Testing of the heart (Prov 17:3)

Testing so that God will lead into righteousness (Ps 139:23-24)

Testing refines (Ps 66:10)

Testing proves faith genuine (1 Peter 1:7)

Testing aids in receiving God's inheritance (Heb 11:8)

FEASTING CONVICTIONS ABOUT FAITHFULNESS OF GOD (DAN 1:14-17)

God grants endurance (14-16)

God provides endurance through grace (2 Cor 12:9)

God provides endurance through His presence (1 Cor 5:4)

God provides endurance through strength (Col 1:11)

God provides endurance to us from within (Eph 3:20)

Endurance that displays that one is living worthy of the kingdom of God (2 Thess 1:3-5)

Endurance of hardships (2 Tim 2:3)

Endurance that is rewarded by reigning with Jesus (2 Tim 2:12)

Endurance that proves one is a child of God (Heb 12:7-9)

Endurance that is counted as being blessed (James 5:11)
God grants wisdom (17)

God provides wisdom because His word contains it and through obedience it will provide wisdom (Deut 4:5-6)

God provides wisdom because God can fill with all knowledge, wisdom and understanding (Col 1:9)

God provides wisdom because His wisdom is pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere (James 3:17)

God provides wisdom because He teaches it to those who seek it (Ps 90:12)

Wisdom comes through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:8)

Wisdom is in Jesus (1 Cor 1:30)

Wisdom that comes from the fear of the Lord (Prov 3:7-8)

Wisdom that comes from God (Prov 2:6-7)

Wisdom that keeps and preserves (Prov 4:5-7)

Wisdom through prayer (James 1:5)

FASTING CONVICTIONS ABOUT GOD'S GUIDANCE (MATT 6:16-18)

Guidance to avoid hypocrisy (16)

Avoid hypocrisy because it shuts the kingdom of heaven from others (Matthew 23:13)

Avoid hypocrisy because it causes divisions and obstacles (Romans 16:17-18)

Avoid hypocrisy because it neglects important things (Matt 23:23-24)

Avoid hypocrisy because it says one thing, but does another (Matt 23:2-7)

Avoid hypocrisy because it is just going through the motions (Isa 58:2-4)

Guidance about secrecy (17-18)

In secrecy so that total honesty and openness can be expressed and examined (Matt 6:6)

In secrecy to be alone with God (Matt 14:23)

In secrecy to come to terms with sin and its indignation (Isa 26:20)

In secrecy to wait on God's answer in patient expectation (Ps 5:3)