



Touching Lives
with James Merritt



SERMON SINGLES

Fasting

Matthew 6:6-18

INTRODUCTION

Fasting is something we honestly know very little about and we don't practice it very much. We know a lot about feasting, but we don't know a lot about fasting, which, in a way, I get. On any given day, I would choose a feast over a fast anytime. Yet, if we want to be on the right side of history, we need to learn about fasting and we need to understand why it is a discipline we should experience. Fasting is just as much a part of the Christian life as other spiritual disciplines like praying and giving. So in this message, I am going to tell you two things we should do with fasting and one thing we shouldn't.

KEY POINTS

1. We Should Undertake The Practice Of Fasting

Something you should know about fasting is that it is rarely ever practiced alone. It is always linked with prayer. They are joined at the hip. Fasting is the perfect environment for really wanting to pray and seek the Lord at another level.

When Jesus began His ministry after He was baptized by John, He could have gone out and done a lot of things. He didn't throw a party. He didn't call a press conference. He didn't give a great speech to thousands of people. He didn't do any great miracles or enter a parade. He began His ministry with a forty-day fast.

He would spend the next three years of His life (in fact His entire ministry) doing one primary thing above all things and that was discipling twelve men. But before He chose His twelve disciples, He fasted and He prayed.

2. We Should Understand The Purpose Of Fasting

The purpose of the fast is not to call attention to yourself. It is rather to put your attention on God. If you are not fasting for the right purpose, you may as well not fast. The goal of fasting is to contemplate God and to concentrate on a spiritual matter. Put simply, fasting forces focus on the Father.

The purpose of fasting is always spiritual. It is not to lose weight. It is not to try and kick a sugar habit. It is not to make yourself feel better. The purpose of fasting is to force us to remember and realize just how dependent on God we really are.

NOTES

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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Have you ever fasted before? If so, what was your experience like?
2. If you've never fasted before, what has kept you from practicing this specific spiritual discipline?
3. Is there something weighing on you that you feel the nudge to fast and pray about?
