

SELF-DENIAL

KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

MATT 6:5-15

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Who ...

Moses (40 days twice). David (Saul, David's child).
Elijah (Jezebel). Jehoshaphat (threat).
Ninevites (threat). Daniel (exile). Ezra (safety).
Nehemiah (crisis). Esther (threat).
84-year-old Anna at the temple (habit).
Pharisees: twice a week, Mon and Thu. Lk 18:12

Keys to the Kingdom

Introduction	Prayer - 6:5-15
Attitude - 5:1-12	<u>Self-Denial - 6:16-18</u>
Influence - 5:13-16	Investment - 6:19-24
Self-Control - 5:17-30	Preoccupation - 6:25-34
Faithfulness - 5:31-37	Discernment - 7:1-12
Response-Ability - 5:38-42	Direction - 7:13-14
Love - 5:43-48	Obedience - 7:15-23
Generosity - 6:1-4	Action - 7:24-27

Jesus Fasted. Why?

Matt 4:1-2 Led by the Spirit, into the wilderness, to be tempted; after fasting 40 days, then hungry.
To prepare Himself for temptation and ministry.
To be genuinely hungry, and so truly tempted.
To face and reject Satan's temptations early.
To re-enact Israel's time in the desert.
To feed upon the Word of God.

What ...

Fasting is deliberately abstaining from food and sometimes drink for a set period of time.
E.g., each morning you "break" your "fast."
Of course you may "abstain" from anything, but "fasting" refers to food and perhaps drink.

The Multitude Fasted. Why?

Matt 15:32 And Jesus ... said, "I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way."
The crowd went without food because they chose rather to "feast" on Jesus' teachings.

Jesus' Disciples Would Fast. Why?

Luke 5:33-39 As wedding attendants (the disciples), not while the groom (Jesus) was with them, but only when He was taken away. He said, "They will fast in those days."

Fast only when there is a suitable reason.

When we enjoy and celebrate our walk with the Lord? No! When we feel distant from the Lord (sin, sorrow, pain) and seek a closer walk? Yes!

Not ...

Not with a gloomy, disfigured, woeful face.

σκυθρωποί – skythrōpós – serious- or sad-looking, perhaps gloomy, solemn, bitter, depressed, sorrowful, or melancholic. Gen 40:7; Lk 24:17

ἀφανίζουσιν – aphanizō – to destroy, make unsightly, disfigure, make ugly.

Not to be noticed by men.

The 1st-Century Church Fasted. Why?

Acts 13:1-3 The leaders in Antioch were "worshiping the Lord and fasting." Likely to pray and seek God's will. The Holy Spirit then called Barnabas and Saul. "Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands ... sent them off."

Acts 14:23 And they appointed elders for them in every church, with prayer and fasting they committed them to the Lord in whom ... believed.

But ...

But with anointed head and washed face.

As you normally would appear and behave.

When ...

Not "if," but "when." As with giving and prayer. Jesus assumed the action, addressed the motive. Jesus again went behind the "what" to the "why."

So that ...

So that your fasting will not be noticed by men.

So that God, not other people, may see.

He sees what is done in secret.

As with giving and prayer.

And ...

Jesus promised the Father's reward for fasting.

Mt 6:18 ... and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

Examples

Fast when you need to ...

Pray and meditate on God and His Word.

Express sorrow and repentance for sin.

Draw near to God and seek His favor.

Humble yourself and become more aware of your absolute dependence on God.

Feed your hunger and thirst for righteousness.

Because "man does not live by bread alone."