

1. The Fasted Lifestyle Apart From Love is Dead Works

Luke 10:27 So he answered and said, “ ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’”

A. The First commandment is to love God with everything.

John 17:24 “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

B. We are only able to love God with everything when we see that God has loved us with everything. God has a desire for us and He laid himself down fully in the person of Jesus and loved us with everything even unto death.

Eph 3: 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— 19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

C. When we experience the unending dimension of God’s love we go beyond just understanding the fact of God’s love to actually letting it transform us. The Fasted lifestyle is to come out of a lovesick heart for God and not mere religious duty.

1 Cor 13:1 Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal... 4 Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

D. Some of the cruelest people in the Body of Christ have been those who preach holiness that is a shame. Love is not an abstract concept but we see in 1 Cor 13 it involves actual actions and changing the way we act towards one another. If we are seeking to live the fasted lifestyle and at the same time acting unkind, rudely, thinking we are better than others, to those who miss the mark then we are just a clanging cymbal. Loud noise with no true power.

Psalm 36:8 They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures.

E. Our primary motivation in living a fasted lifestyle must be to experience the superior pleasure of loving God and being loved by God over the pleasures of this world. If our motivation is looking better before others or receiving more revelation to get to a higher level then we will end up becoming puffed up or prideful and being cruel to others who we think have missed the mark.

2. 3 Spheres of the Fasted Lifestyle – Prayer, Fasting, Giving

Mt 5: 6 But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. 7 And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. 8 “Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.

Luke 18: 1 Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart

A. Prayer isn't primarily about reminding God of what we need. Instead it is primarily about a conversation with God as a Father who loves to give good gifts. It is a worshipful conversation where we thank Him for what He is doing in us, who He says we are, and what He wants to do. It isn't mostly about being able to say a really religious complicated prayer before others but about intimacy with our Father as His beloved children. Without the intimacy of a continuing conversation with our loving Father we will lose heart and begin to do things merely out of religious duty or to appear good before others.

Mt. 6:16 “Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. 17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

B. Jesus says “when we fast” not if we fast. Jesus' expectation for those who are attempting to follow Him is that they will fast regularly. Our fasting isn't to earn something from God or to appear religious before people but to experience more of God by setting our affections and our mind away from our stomach and towards God.

Matthew 9:15 And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

C. Jesus is the bridegroom. He is eagerly pursuing us and our hearts to be fully won by His love. In response to his love we fast in order to set our affections on Jesus and experience His love more in our weakness. In the weakness of fasting we must rely more on God. It opens us up to see what we are really like when we are hungry and not feeling our best. We see ourselves more clearly and are able to ask God for strength in the areas of weakness we have been blind to. It's easy to be nice when you feel nice, but when you feel weak you must lean on God.

Phil 3: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things

D. Fasting also allows us to see how much time we spend preoccupied with food. We can be in a church meeting and be thinking more about what is for lunch than the beauty of God. Our stomachs are not above God, but sometimes we allow our stomach to dictate to us what our day will be like more than the Spirit of God.

Mt 6:19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

E. Radical Giving is the final component of the fasted lifestyle. If we go days in fasting but don't give then something is missing. Part of the fasted lifestyle is taking less for ourselves in order to give more. We must see our resources primarily as tools to make eternal impact. “Every dollar bill is a tool to crush the power of Hell” – Bill Johnson.

Mt 6:22 “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

F. The context of the eye being the lamp of our body is MONEY. If we mostly think about our money in terms of how we can make our lives easier and filled with more pleasure then we are filling ourselves with darkness. We are unable to see the truth and the weight of eternity in comparison to how much we are focusing on our own pleasure. But if we are thinking of our resources in terms of how many missionaries we can support, how many hearts can be unlocked when we give to them radically, how many people can be reached for the Gospel, then we are filling ourselves with the light of the truth.

3. The Fasted Lifestyle Is A Solid Foundation

Mt 7: 24 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

A. Many people will try to talk you out of doing the commands of Jesus. They will try to call it legalism and get you out of wholehearted obedience to God. But the Fasted Lifestyle really is simply seeking to love God with everything. In that place we are building a solid foundation and nothing will be able to shake us from the love of God. Do not let yourself be talked out of following Jesus wholeheartedly. It is the key to a solid foundation in our relationship with God and growing in intimacy with Him.