



The Gospel Of Mark

Home Group Discussion Guide

The Power of Fasting

Mark 2:18-22

ICEBREAKER: When were you in a hospital? Describe the situation.

OVERVIEW: Sometimes our prayers go unanswered. But that doesn't mean we should give up. Sometimes the next step is to add fasting to our prayers. Throughout Scripture we find examples of God's people fasting and praying in times of desperation. To live the abundant Christian life, we need to understand and develop this important spiritual discipline in our own lives.

1. What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)
2. Read Mark 2:18-22.
 - Why didn't Jesus' disciples fast?
 - When would Jesus' disciples go back to fasting and why? What insight does this give us about the purpose of fasting?
3. In the sermon it was said that when God give us what we ask for in prayer it is because His answer is either "No," "Grow," or "Slow." Why would God's answer be each of these?
4. Has God ever told you "No," "Grow," or "Slow?" Explain.

5. Sometimes when God doesn't answer our prayers, the reason isn't "No," "Slow," or "Grow." The reason is that God wants us to add fasting to our prayers. Elmer Towns writes, "When you can't get an answer to your prayer, even though you have prayed continually, try fasting with your prayer. Fasting demonstrates your sincerity to God. When you give up food – that which is enjoyable and necessary – you get God's attention." If you have tried fasting (for spiritual reasons), what did God do in your life through your experience?
6. Read Matthew 6:16-18. What insights can you learn about effective fasting from this passage?
7. When you fast, why is it important to focus more on God — more time in prayer and in the word?
8. Why is an example of trying to manipulate God with fasting, and why is that an ineffective way to fast?
9. Why is it important to repent of sin when you fast? If you were to begin a fast tomorrow morning, what sins in your life would you need to clean up?
10. Richard Foster writes, "Fasting in Scripture was often a desperate measure to meet a dire emergency." When you fast, it is important to fast with a purpose. Something very urgent and important to you. If you had to pick something in your life to fast about, what would the purpose be, and what would the parameters be? Might God be calling you to fast?

The Last Word: The purpose of fasting is to ask God to draw near and do a miracle in desperate circumstances. The next time you are in a desperate situation don't despair; don't give up; add fasting to your prayers. "And your Father, who sees everything, will reward you (Matt. 6:18)."