

FOLLOW UP STUDY 4: Bible Study, Prayer & Fasting

Scripture Memory Verse: **Psalm 42:2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.**

When can I go and meet with God?

Purpose: To teach the importance of Bible Study, Prayer & Fasting in our relationship with God and for our spiritual growth.

PRAYER

Q: How important is communication in a relationship?

Good communication is at the heart of every relationship. A relationship with God thrives on communication as well. From the Bible, God speaks to us. In prayer, we speak to God.

Mark 1:35 Jesus was a busy man, but always found time to pray and found places free from distraction.

Q: What are the potential challenges in your life for finding the time and the place to pray?

Luke 11:1-4 Give us each day or daily bread...When a first century Jew would have heard "daily bread" they would have remembered the exodus. In Exodus 16 (manna from heaven), the Israelites had to rely on God for nourishment. As they collected the manna, they found it would only keep for one day. This made God's people go to God every day to get what they needed to survive.

In the same way today, we must understand that we need daily spiritual nourishment or we cannot survive. We can't survive on weekly services and fellowship. We need God every day to sustain us.

Q: What would have happened to the Israelites if they had stopped going daily into the desert for manna?

Q: What will happen to us if we do not go spend time with God daily?

Jesus used this model prayer to teach his disciples how to pray:

- a. "Our Father" -- **Acknowledge God**
- b. "Holy be your name"—**Give praise to God** (great examples in Psalms)
- c. "Your kingdom come"—**Pray for others** (the church, family, enemies, leaders, non-Christians, etc.)
- d. "Give us each day our daily bread"—**Pray for your daily needs** (think spiritual, emotional and physical needs. Pray through your daily schedule.
- e. "Forgive us our sins"—**Confess & ask God's forgiveness**
- f. "Lead us not into temptation"—**Pray for spiritual protection**

Luke 11:5-13

Q: What does Jesus' story teach us about our prayer lives?

- Be bold. (v8)
- Know that God loves you and wants what is best for you! (v13)

Philippians 4:6-7 God cares for you. Prayer is a time we can bring our burdens, anxieties and worries to God.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 "Pray continually"...prayer is something that should become a continuous habit. We're to include God in our thoughts and heart as we go through our day.

BIBLE STUDY

Psalm 1:1-3—the Bible does not actually say that we should have a "Quiet Time" everyday...it actually goes much further! The blessed man is the one who meditates on God's word day and night...not just 20-30 minutes a day!

Q: What is the difference between "mediation" and "just reading"?

Acts 8:26-29—The Ethiopian was a busy, important man who found the time to study God's word.

Psalm 42:2--He had the desire all must have.

Practical Bible Study Tips:

1. Decide in advance what you want to study. Have a plan.
2. Study one book of the Bible (read, outline, study)
3. Study a section of a book (Sermon on the Mount; Last Supper, etc.)
4. Study one topic (grace, faith, purity, etc.—use a concordance)
5. Study the life of one Character (Abraham, Moses, David, Ruth, etc.)
6. Study out a sermon you've heard
7. Ask a question you don't know the answer to and dig for an answer.
8. Read out loud.
9. Read different translations
10. Use a notebook to write down thoughts & questions
11. Share what you are learning

FASTING

Matthew 9:14-15—Jesus expected that after he departed, his disciples would dedicate themselves to the spiritual act of fasting.

Bible Reasons for Fasting: repentance (Jonah 3:5-8; Acts 9:9); to draw near to God (Exodus 34:27-28; Luke 2:36-37; Acts 13:1-3); for God's help & deliverance (Daniel 9:3); to seek God's will in appointing and guiding leadership Acts 14:23); for other people's needs (Psalms 35:13; Isaiah 58:6-8)

How to Fast:

- a. Matthew 6:16-18: Fasting should be done in humility, in secrecy & without complaining.
- b. Nehemiah 1:4; 9:1-3; Joel 2:12; Acts 13:1-3: Fasting should be accompanied by prayer and Bible Study
- c. Fasting can be specific (abstaining from only specific things) or absolute (no food or water at all).
Absolute: Ezra 10:6; Esther 4:16
Specific: 1 Corinthians 7:5; Daniel 10:3
- d. Fasting can be done corporately (group) or individually (personal).
Corporate: 1 Samuel 7:5-7; Ezra 8:21-23; Acts 13:1-3
Personal: Daniel 9:3; Psalm 35:13

Fasting should be a regular part of a Christian's life. Fasting helps us draw near to God, depend on Him, and be strengthened and empowered by Him. Those who had a great relationship with God in the Bible (Moses, Daniel, David, Elijah) all made fasting an essential part of their spiritual lives. We should follow their example, along with Jesus' example, in making fasting a regular part of our spiritual lives!