

The Ancient Paths: Fasting

Isaiah 58:1-8 ❖ Matthew 6:16-18

“Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts,
Thou fount of life, Thou light of men,
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
We turn unfilled to Thee again.”
 (“Bernard of Clairvaux, 1150)

“Tell Me the Story of Jesus”

Fanny Crosby (1820-1915) was _____ from the age of six weeks, but she was such a prolific hymn writer that she was forced to use _____ names so hymnbooks wouldn't be filled with her name.

Crosby wrote over _____ hymns, including many we still sing today: “Blessed _____,” “To God Be the _____,” “All the Way My _____ Leads Me,” “I Am _____, O Lord,” just to name a few.

“Tell me the story of Jesus, write on my heart every _____;
Tell me the story most precious, sweetest that ever was _____.
_____ alone in the desert, tell of the days that are past,
How for our _____ He was tempted, yet was triumphant at last.”

Fasting 101

What is your initial reaction to the thought of fasting?

“Throughout Scripture fasting normally refers to abstaining from _____, but not from _____, for spiritual purposes.” (“Celebration of Discipline,” Richard Foster, pp.48-49)

Fasting is a practice that is only _____ for those who have _____ to eat each day. At least _____ % of the world's population goes to bed hungry every night.

The purpose of fasting is to substitute _____ for preparing food and eating it. While fasting hunger _____ remind us to _____.

Some Biblical Examples of Fasting

1) Group Fasting: “The King issued a proclamation in _____: Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock _____ anything; do not let them _____ or drink” (Jonah 3:7).

2) Individual Fasting: The Apostle Paul wrote that “he _____ fasted” (2 Corinthians 11:27).

3) Jesus Fasted: “After fasting _____ days and _____ nights, Jesus was _____” (Matthew 4:2).

Misconceptions About Fasting

1) Spiritual fasting is the same as fasting for _____ or _____ testing.

2) The objective for fasting is to obtain a _____ from God.

3) All Christians _____ fast.

Purposes for Fasting

1) To teach us to rely on God: “O God, do not remain silent, for wicked and deceitful men have attacked me _____ cause. My knees give way from _____” (Psalm 109:1-3, 24).

2) To clarify what God wants us to do: “Is not this the kind of _____ I have chosen: Is it not to share your food with the _____ and to provide the poor _____ with shelter, when you see the _____, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own _____ and _____?” (Isaiah 58:6-7)

3) To receive guidance from God: “While they were worshipping the Lord and _____, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set _____ for me Barnabus and Saul for the _____ to which I have called them’” (Acts 13:2).

Practical Advice on How to Fast

1) Jesus said, “_____ you fast, (do it) so it will not be _____ to men that you are fasting, but only to your _____ who is unseen ... (Matthew 6:17-18).

2) The only way to learn to fast is by _____.

3) If at first you don't succeed, try, try _____.

