

This week, I share an article from Guideposts on the topic of fasting. This is one of the acts of piety mentioned by Wesley, yet one that most of us do not practice.

“Many of us think of fasting as a spiritual duty to God, depriving ourselves of food and drink for a period of time in order to prove our love for Him. While long-suffering is a part of being human and certainly a part of being Christian, fasting should not be included when we think about “suffering for Christ.”

On the contrary, fasting is less about what we’re giving up and much more about what we’re making room for. When we fast, we exchange what we need to survive for what we need to live—more of God. Here are five spiritual benefits to fasting:

1) A soul cleansing. How often we forget that our bodies are the temple of the Lord—especially when deciding what to eat! Fasting is a great time to remember the spiritual connection we have to our physical bodies. Without the toxins we put in our bodies, we not only give our bodies a break from the digestive process, but we also allow our spirits to be detoxed. Fasting is a faith-move, an expectation we have that God will fill us with His Holy Spirit, just as He promised. But as Christ told His disciples, “[No] one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins.” By fasting, we meditate which cleanses the soul and makes it new so we can receive the Holy Spirit and become empowered to live for Christ in a new way.

2) A new desire for God. When we acknowledge through fasting that we need God to live, and to live more abundantly, we can begin to desire God in a new way. When we realize we need God more than we need food, we can start to understand what the Psalmist meant when he wrote, “Like the deer that pants after water, my soul longs for You.” God, the sustainer of all life, wants nothing more than a closer connection with us, and through fasting we can quench that new desire for more of Him in our lives.

3) A deeper praise. Because the body does not have to do the work of digestion, it has more energy to focus on other things. In the same vein, since we are not consumed by what we are going to eat next and when, we have more energy to devote to God. While we’re experiencing a new desire for Him through fasting, we should also emit a deeper praise as we think about everything God is to us and all He has done. Once we get caught up in our

Disciple Life

The Wesleyan Way

Week # 31



Start the Conversation:
Provoke One Another in Love

PROVOKING QUESTION:

This week, you are encouraged to ask a church member the following:

**Have you ever fasted?
What was the experience like for you?
Would you do it again?**

desire for God and our praise for His mighty acts, we won’t have time to be hungry or count down the hours until our fast is over. We’ll be celebrating the whole time!

4) A sensitivity to God’s voice. The New Testament prophetess Anna is praised in the book of Luke for being a devoted servant to God and His temple. Because she regularly fasted and prayed, she was able to hear the voice of God speak clearly to her the day that Baby Jesus was brought into her temple to be dedicated. She knew He was the Christ and told everyone who would listen about His arrival. When we detox the spirit and become consumed with desire and praise for God, we become sensitive to His voice. Like Anna, when God speaks to us in the midst of chaos, we’ll still be able to pick out His voice and know what He wants us to do because we have trained our ear to hear Him through fasting, prayer, study and praise.

5) A new satisfaction. When you finish your fast, renewed, full of energy, detoxed, with a new desire, a new praise and a sensitivity to God’s voice, you’ll find that the absence of food was small in comparison to what you gained. When Christ’s disciples noticed that He hadn’t eaten all day and tried to get Him to slow down to eat, Christ said, “I have food to eat that you know nothing about....My food is to do the will of Him who sent me and to finish His work.”

Physical food never fully satisfies; in a few hours, you’ll need to eat again. But when you are fed from doing the work of the Lord, you will find a new satisfaction like you’ve never experienced.

Written by Brooke Obie and posted on Dec 15, 2014. Original article can be found at: <https://www.guideposts.org/better-living/health-and-wellness/5-spiritual-benefits-of-fasting>

Carry the cross  **and follow me.**
Luke 14:27, NRSV

WEEKLY VERSES

A Week's Worth of God's Word

as found at Crosswalk.com

Monday

Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe. **Hebrews 12:28** (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...We are receiving the triumphant and glorious victory of God in his Kingdom. We will join with the angels and the saints of old and live with the Father forever in victorious and never-ending joy. But this Kingdom doesn't begin just when Jesus returns. This Kingdom has started now in his Church, his people, those in whom God's will is cherished and obeyed. So our worship should be filled with awe that the holy God of Israel is also the lowly God in Jesus who has redeemed us and made us to be a holy people unto himself. What else can we do but worship with heartfelt thanksgiving and wonder-struck awe?

MY PRAYER...Holy and Righteous Father, all things are yours. Thank you for sharing your blessings, your promises, your hope, and your victory with us in Jesus. Please help me to live a more thankful, victorious life before my unbelieving friends and as an example to my children so they may come to share your glorious Kingdom and ultimate victory. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Tuesday

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. **Colossians 3:16** (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...We sing when we are happy. We sing when we are heartbroken. Today we sing out of gratitude. God is not only worthy of all of our praise, he is worthy of all of our thankfulness. But the basis of all our songs is Jesus, and the proclamation of the good news that brings life to us through him. As that message, that word of Christ fills our hearts, we are tuned to be thankful children of the Most High.

MY PRAYER...I am so thankful today, Lord, for all the many blessings you have poured into my life. Your love, grace, mercy, and forgiveness give me hope for the future. Your gift of Jesus gives me life today and promises life tomorrow. The incredible physical blessings, as well as the blessings of family and friends, are wonderful. But the greatest of all blessings is the assurance that I will one day see you face-to-face and share your glorious presence forever. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Wednesday

Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done. **1 Chronicles 16:8** (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...Giving thanks is more than being thankful to God, it is letting others know of his gracious works so they too can come to know him as Father, Redeemer, and Victorious Lord.

MY PRAYER...Holy God, Almighty King, bless all those who serve you in difficult places today. I especially am thankful for all the missionaries in other cultures sharing the grace of Jesus with people who need to know you as Abba Father. Empower their words, protect their lives and families, and bless their efforts with fruit. Please help me to understand that true thankfulness involves sharing your grace with others. Through Jesus I pray. Amen.

Thursday

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love endures forever. Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever. **Psalms 136** (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...Our thanks arises from the nature of God and his glory and goodness. The steadfast reason we give thanks is because God is good and his love is inexhaustible, beyond decay, and never ending.

MY PRAYER...O great Lover of my soul, thank you for sending Jesus as the demonstration of your love. I love you Father. I love you for who you are and what you have done. I love you for what you have promised. I love you for the blessings you shower upon me. I love you for giving me hope. I love you because you first loved me. I love you because you are worthy of all love. But I confess that my love is not as strong as yours, so please, fill me with your love by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through Jesus I lift my heart to you. Amen.

Friday

The day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives.

2 Peter 3:10-11 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...Holiness is that forgotten character virtue that is the Christian's reflection of God, his or her holy and righteous Father. In a day of cheap grace, when anything goes just as long as we want to be buddies with Jesus, Peter's words should shock us into reverence - the commitment in life to set our lives apart from the evil and sludge that defiles our hearts and to offer our bodies, hearts, and minds to do his

will and reflect his character.

MY PRAYER...Holy and Righteous Father, teach me to do your will and reflect your character while offering your grace. May the movements of my heart, the thoughts of my mind, and the actions of my life be pleasing to you and reflect your holiness and grace. In Jesus name I pray. Amen.

Saturday

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. **John 1:1-2** (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...All true ministry is "incarnational" - it involves people to people contact, human touch, and genuine physical care. While Heartlight is an Internet ministry, it will never live in cyberspace. It must be carried into the daily life of believers who are committed to share the grace of Jesus with their FRANS (Friends, Relatives, Acquaintances, Neighbors). Just as God purposely sent Jesus at the right time to the right place, he did so with us. We are here to bless others, "not just in word, but in deed and truth!"

MY PRAYER...Glorious Father, thank you for putting me where I am. I know I am here to do your work and carry on Jesus' ministry. Help me seize the opportunities you give me today to bless others in the name of Jesus. Through him I pray. Amen.

Sunday

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (NIV)

THOUGHTS ABOUT TODAY'S VERSE...God is a speaking God. He loves us and has chosen to get his message to us in words. First there were the patriarchs and great prophets. Then there was the written record in the Scriptures. But God's greatest message, his most powerful words, were not really words at all, but a person named Jesus of Nazareth, who is Christ and Lord of all. For us, his Church, to be what he wants us to be, we must not just look at Scripture, we must also look at him. He is the key to understanding what Scripture means and how it is to be lived.

MY PRAYER...Holy Father, help me to see Jesus and his work and purpose more clearly as I open your Book and seek to understand your will. Fill me with your Spirit, so that I may greet each decision awakened to the answer to "What would Jesus do?" Through Jesus, my Lord and Savior I pray. Amen.