

BIBLE STUDY SERIES:

TRUSTING THE FATHER

FASTING (MEAT & DRINK)

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INTENTION:

Fasting is not about getting God to move based on sacrificing something.

Nor is it a calendar-ritual or religious requirement.

It is there to help break through your own unbelief.

I. TOPIC:

We want to look at Fasting (Meat & Drink) and what it means for us.

Food (“meat”) and drink are basic survival needs, programmed in us to continue life on this earth. It is the most basic form of our nature. Yet, we are not just natural beings, but spiritual. Thus, we have a need to “feed” both, but place our Born-Again Spiritual reality above the other.

Our natural realm exists out of the soul within us—the term “natural” being a derivative of the term “soul”:

Soul – G5590: *psychē*

2. The soul

- a. the seat of the feelings, desires, affections, aversions (our heart, soul etc.)
- b. the (human) soul in so far as it is constituted that by the right use of the aids offered it by God it can attain its highest end and secure eternal blessedness, the soul regarded as a moral being designed for everlasting life
- c. the soul as an essence which differs from the body and is not dissolved by death (distinguished from other parts of the body)

Natural – G5591: *psychikos*

1. of or belonging to breath

- a. having the nature and characteristics of the breath
 - i. the principal of animal life, which men have in common with the brutes
- b. governed by breath
 - ii. the sensuous nature with its subjection to appetite and passion

As our natural-born self relates to the basic “animal” instincts all species have, it can be the core of what drives us.

This duality of natural and spiritual often puts a conflict in us—a power-struggle in a way. Whom we yield ourselves to, we become slaves to ([Romans 6:16](#)). Our “animal instincts” can take over from the Spiritual; the Spiritual likewise taking over from the natural (soul).

This is where I feel that fasting can become a means to help overcome the natural (both the flesh and unbelief).

When we fast, we must do so from the Spiritual (Holy Spirit driven), not driven out of the flesh. What is meant here is that the flesh can seek its own glory in fasting—it will try and show itself as strong by being able to fast (go without). If fasting only becomes fleshly, ritualistic, or religious, then it cannot benefit the Spiritual Life.

Just as Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness to fast for 40 days, we too can be led by the Holy Spirit to fast. For me personally, I saw this early on after my Baptism of the Holy Spirit where He would just lead me to fast for a meal, a day, a week, etc. And I found that when it was Him leading and me obeying in the Spirit, the desire for food was not very strong—as though the Spirit Himself was giving me the ability to overcome the flesh (natural).

Typically for me, especially when under stress and duress (anxiety-laden trouble), my flesh wants to find a means to calm that struggle through food. I then tend to stress-eat. But this never actually calms anything long-term in me to bring me peace. Thus, I succumb to my human nature instead of the Spiritual.

We can look at the powerful reality that is human nature for food and drink in the feeding of the “five thousand” (this number not counting women and children). And then the aftermath of that miracle, where, because they were all fed in abundance (their natural self being taken care of), they wanted to force Jesus to be their king. Yet, Jesus escaped and then let them know that it isn’t natural meat and drink that brings life, but Him as the Christ.

When we feed the Spiritual (not neglecting the natural), we gain a Life that mere food (meat) and drink cannot give us. This is a Kingdom of Heaven (Kingdom of God) reality!

Please note, though, that the fasting I am talking about here is one of abstaining from food and drink through the examples given. For you personally, you may not be in a place where that is doable or healthy for you. If you have medical conditions that affect your body, your personal fast may be from something else (not food or drink). Hence why it is important for you to use your personal relationship with the Lord to guide you into what you must fast from.

II. READING: [John 6:1-69](#) (EHV)

After this, Jesus crossed over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee (or Tiberias). 2 A large crowd followed him because they saw the miraculous signs he was performing on those who were sick. 3 Jesus went up on the hillside and sat down there with his disciples. 4 The Jewish Passover Festival was near.

5 When Jesus looked up and saw a huge crowd coming toward him, he asked Philip, “Where can we buy bread for these people to eat?” 6 But Jesus was saying this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do.

7 Philip answered him, “Two hundred denarii (two hundred days’ wages) worth of bread would not be enough for each of them to have just a little.”

8 One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, 9 “There’s a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what is that for so many people?”

10 Jesus said, “Have the people sit down.” There was plenty of grass in that place, so they sat down. There were about five thousand men.

11 Then Jesus took the loaves and, after giving thanks, he distributed pieces to those who were seated. He also did the same with the fish—as much as they wanted.

12 When the people were full, he told his disciples, “Gather the pieces that are left over so that nothing is wasted.”

13 So they gathered them and filled twelve baskets with pieces from the five barley loaves left over by those who had eaten.

14 When the people saw the miraculous sign Jesus did, they said, “This really is the Prophet who is coming into the world.”

15 When Jesus realized that they intended to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

16 When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, 17 got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was already dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 A strong wind started to blow, and the sea became rough.

19 After they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea toward their boat, and they were afraid.

20 But he said to them, “It is I. Do not be afraid!”

21 Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

22 The next day, the crowd that stayed on the other side of the sea noticed that only one boat was there. They also knew that Jesus had not stepped into the boat with his disciples, but they had gone away without him. 23 Other boats from Tiberias came to shore near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord gave thanks. 24 When the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. 25 When they found him on the other side of the sea, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

26 Jesus answered them, “Amen, Amen, I tell you: You are not looking for me because you saw the miraculous signs, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. 27 Do not continue to work for the food that spoils, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

28 So they said to him, “What should we do to carry out the works of God?”

29 Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God: that you believe in the one he sent.”

30 Then they asked him, "So what miraculous sign are you going to do, that we may see it and believe you? What miraculous sign are you going to perform? 31 Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, just as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

32 Jesus said to them, "Amen, Amen, I tell you: Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the real bread from heaven. 33 For the bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

34 "Sir," they said to him, "give us this bread all the time!"

35 "I am the Bread of Life," Jesus told them. "The one who comes to me will never be hungry, and the one who believes in me will never be thirsty. 36 But I said to you that you have also seen me, and you do not believe. 37 Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never cast out. 38 For I have come down from heaven, not to do my will, but the will of him who sent me. 39 And this is the will of him who sent me: that I should lose none of those he has given me, but raise them up on the Last Day. 40 For this is the will of my Father: that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life. And I will raise him up on the Last Day."

41 So the Jews started grumbling about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 They asked, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? So how can he say, 'I have come down from heaven'?"

43 Jesus answered them, "Stop grumbling among yourselves. 44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the Last Day. 45 It is written in the Prophets, 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. 46 I am not saying that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God. He is the one who has seen the Father. 47 Amen, Amen, I tell you: The one who believes in me has eternal life.

48 "I am the Bread of Life. 49 Your fathers ate manna in the wilderness, and they died. 50 This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that anyone may eat it and not die. 51 I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread, he will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

52 At that, the Jews argued among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

53 So Jesus said to them, "Amen, Amen, I tell you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life in yourselves. 54 The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the Last Day. 55 For my flesh is real food, and my blood is real drink. 56 The one who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 57 Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like your fathers ate and died. The one who eats this bread will live forever."

59 He said these things while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. 60 When they heard it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching! Who can listen to it?"

61 But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples were grumbling about this, asked them, "Does this cause you to stumble in your faith? 62 What if you would see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? 63 The Spirit is the one who gives life. The flesh does not help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning those who would not believe and the one who would betray him. 65 He said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is given to him by my Father."

66 After this, many of his disciples turned back and were not walking with him anymore. 67 So Jesus asked the Twelve, "You do not want to leave too, do you?"

68 Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God."

III. RELATED VERSES AND QUESTIONS:

- A. God's Word has always existed (from the beginning). Jesus is the "Word that became flesh", meaning a literal representation of the Word—an accurate and correct representation of God. There is so much confusion about "God" (even in the Bible), that we don't always recognise His Word of Life and Light—especially in the "natural" that has convinced us otherwise. Thus, His Word can feel so new or different, that it can be confusing to us until we start discerning between the Spirit and this world. We may get "tastes" and "samplings" of this Life and Light Word; but if it is mixed with so much junk of the world (or religion), we may never feel fully sustained by it.

[John 1:1-14](#) (EHV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. 5 The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

9 The real light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. 13 They were born, not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband's will, but born of God.

14 The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Question: Have you ever felt unfulfilled through Scripture (the "Word")—as though malnourished? Has there been times where it was so good, you wanted more?

Response:

- B. During Jesus's time in the wilderness, we aren't fully aware of what Jesus was doing, but we do know that he was fasting (food and drink). Of interest, is that only after the 40 days and nights did He become hungry. This natural hunger became His first test, in which He answered by giving importance to the feeding of the Spiritual (the Word of God)—by which Jesus (in our [John 6](#) reading above) shared that He "is the Bread of Life" for us. This long fast Jesus went through, shows the strength of the Holy Spirit (Spiritual) during that time to overcome the natural. But then, once Jesus had completed the temptations, angels came and served (ministered) to Him. This term "ministered" ([G1247](#)) includes to "offer food and drink", showing care for (not outright rejecting) the natural.

[Matthew 4:1-11](#) (EHV)

Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the Devil. 2 After he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. 3 The Tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread."

4 But Jesus answered, "It is written: Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes out of the mouth of God."

5 Then the Devil took him into the holy city. He placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, 6 and he said to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down. For it is written: He will command his angels concerning you. And they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."

7 Jesus said to him, "Again, it is written: You shall not test the Lord your God."

8 Again the Devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. 9 He said to him, "I will give you all of these things, if you will bow down and worship me."

10 Then Jesus said to him, "Go away, Satan! For it is written: Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only."

11 Then the Devil left him, and just then angels came and served him.

Question: Jesus is now the most true and accurate Word of God—what are ways you are feeding off of Jesus as an accurate demonstration of who God is (Love) with Jesus's accomplishment through the Cross?

Response:

- C. Jesus criticized the Pharisees in their fasting. For the Pharisees, it was ritualistic habit (done religiously) and from the flesh—as they made their fasting known to others to "show off". This is why the importance of fasting from the direction of the Spirit for reasons of the Spirit—not to do so for the sake of doing so. The Pharisees gained nothing but "a pat on the back" from others without any gain of the Spiritual / Heavenly. Their "treasure" was to look good in the sight of other people, not for the Lord.

[Matthew 6:16-21](#) (EHV)

"Whenever you fast, do not make yourself look sad like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces to show everyone that they are fasting. Amen I tell you: They have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 so that it is not apparent to people that you are fasting, but only to your Father who sees what is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

19 "Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 Because where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Question: Have you fasted because you were told to, or because it was part of your religious custom?

Response:

- D. During Jesus's ministry, there came a time where His disciples could not cast out a demon from a child. When the disciples asked him why, Jesus responded with the need for "fasting and praying". But what we have to understand, is that fasting and praying won't cast out the demon (not what Jesus was instructing), but that the purpose of fasting and praying was to help overcome any unbelief (as the boy's father requested). Unbelief just being the "flesh reality", not God's reality. Even Jesus spent whole nights in prayer (possibly without food / drink).

[Mark 9:17-29](#) (EHV) {PoG}

One man from the crowd answered him, “Teacher, I brought you my son, who has a spirit that makes him unable to speak. 18 Wherever it seizes him, it throws him down, and he foams at the mouth, grinds his teeth, and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive it out, but they could not.”

19 “O unbelieving generation,” Jesus replied. “How long will I be with you? How long will I put up with you? Bring him to me.”

20 They brought the boy to Jesus. As soon as the spirit saw him, it threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell on the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.

21 Jesus asked the boy’s father, “How long has this been happening to him?”

“From childhood,” he said. 22 “It has often thrown him into the fire and into the water to kill him. But if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.”

23 “If you can?” Jesus said to him. “All things are possible for the one who believes.”

24 The child’s father immediately cried out and said with tears, “I do believe. Help me with my unbelief!”

25 When Jesus saw that a crowd was quickly gathering, he rebuked the unclean spirit. “You mute and deaf spirit,” he said, “I command you to come out of him and never enter him again!”

26 The spirit screamed, shook the boy violently, and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many of them said, “He’s dead!” 27 But Jesus took him by the hand, raised him up, and he stood up.

28 When Jesus went into a house, his disciples asked him privately, “Why were we not able to drive it out?”

29 He said to them, “This kind {*of unbelief*} cannot be driven out, except by prayer and fasting.”

Question: How do you feel fasting and praying can help you overcome unbelief?

Response:

- E. Fasting is not a means to force a prayer to be answered or miracle to be “released” by the Lord—this would be a flesh action to try and get God to move based on what we have done (hence the Pharisees “look at me” fasting). As a Born-Again believer, we have been freely Gifted by God, through Jesus, in the Spirit all things we will ever need in the here and now to overcome the world. So, we are not fasting to get, we are fasting to remove the “unbelief” hindrances that block the Gifts of the Spirit out from us into any given situation. Thus, it is a personal obstacle in us we have to remove, not that God is not moving on our behalf. The best way to know that it is our own unbelief is to know and learn what we have already been Gifted by God to use.

[Ephesians 1:3](#) (EHV)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

[Ephesians 2:4-10](#) (EHV)

But God, because he is rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in trespasses. It is by grace you have been saved! 6 He also raised us up with

Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. 7 He did this so that, in the coming ages, he might demonstrate the surpassing riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 Indeed, it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast.

10 For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared in advance so that we would walk in them.

[Philippians 4:13](#) (EHV)

I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.

Question: Can you recognise anything you already have been Gifted that you have been fasting and praying for?

Response:

- F. Because of the conflict that can exist in us between our flesh (what we learned from this world) and the Spirit (what we have from the Lord), we must remind ourselves that the flesh has already been overcome. When we become Born-Again, our identity as being in the flesh WAS, at that moment, changed to that of Christ’s Identity. As such, we need to believe, understand, and put into practice in our lives now, that the flesh has already been crucified—that it has died and does not actually have the power over us that we feel it has. For us, being a “living sacrifice” isn’t that we are always climbing back onto the alter to crucify our flesh again and again, but knowing that it was already sacrificed (once and for all time) and that we NOW live as having been sacrificed, risen in Christ Jesus! From this reality, we can begin to forget all we knew in the flesh—renewing our minds to this truth.

[Romans 12:1-2](#) (EHV)

Therefore I urge you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice—holy and pleasing to God—which is your appropriate worship. 2 Also, do not continue to conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, so that you test and approve what is the will of God—what is good, pleasing, and perfect.

[Galatians 5:24](#) (EHV)

Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful flesh with its passions and desires.

Question: How can fasting help us prove the existence that we already have been (our flesh has been) crucified?

Response:

- G. With how strong our natural desires can be for survival (food and drink), our flesh can seek for itself its own means to achieve a form of peace and joy (self-gratification). But there really is no amount of food or drink that can bring the satisfaction that the Holy Spirit can bring. Those following Jesus from our reading in [John 6](#) thought

that unlimited food and drink was enough to have Jesus a king for their kingdom. It's not what our bodies desire for survival (that satisfy our flesh), but what the Holy Spirit provides as His life, not just the life of the body.

[Romans 14:17](#) (EHV)

For the kingdom of God does not consist of eating and drinking, but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Question: To you, what is the comparison here between the natural and the Spiritual?

Response:

IV. FURTHER THOUGHT:

A. [1 Corinthians 15:44b-49](#) (EHV) {PoG}

If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. 45 So also it is written, “The first man, Adam, became a living {soul ([G5590](#))}.” The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 However, that which is spiritual is not first; rather, first comes the natural {[G5591](#)}, then the spiritual. 47 The first man is of the earth, made of dust. The second man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As was the man made of dust, so are the people who are made of dust, and as is the heavenly man, so the heavenly people will be. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the man made of dust, let us also bear the image of the heavenly man.

Thoughts: We are born into this world stemming from God’s original Creation with Adam. But Adam sinned and brought that upon us all. Yet, God loves us so much, that He redeemed this world from Adam’s sin and gave us the chance to be Born-Again into His Spiritual reality (existence). In that sense, we live both in the natural and the spiritual. The Spiritual will never cease, yet the natural will. Both need caring for.

But, as the Spiritual is eternal, we need to Live from the Spiritual, not just the natural. Helping us discern the two is through fasting. We then can remove what does not belong, what is already dead (sacrificed), and feed on Jesus who brings us a greater Life from the Spiritual into the natural—more than what we can ever achieve on our own (by the flesh). We must now (on this earth) let the Image of the Heavenly (Jesus) show through the image of the natural (Adam), understanding that both exist in the now.

For as we heal and remove the things that don’t belong (that the flesh has hindered us with), we reveal (manifest) our Created-Self (Christ-Self / Spiritual-Self) that is us.

Bible Study: Lesson 041

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