



Luke 5:33-35

# A New Philosophy of Ministry

## Fasting & Spiritual Disciplines



### Jesus & Fasting

Jesus' teaching about fasting is significantly different from His other teachings. This is one of the few areas where Jesus said to do not as He did but as He taught. In other words, Jesus taught His disciples to do something different than He had done, that is, after He was gone.

We should not think that He was trying to live at different standards than others. No one could accuse Jesus of living a life of luxury. He didn't even touch the money bag. He had no home and had no possessions. He wasn't out yachting on the Sea of Galilee in His extended free time. Nor is it true that He was dominated by food. He spent forty days in the deserted mountains with no food whatsoever.

There are at least two reasons Jesus didn't fast with His disciples:

1) Jesus' message was of utmost importance. His three years of ministry were limited. Proclamation of the kingdom of God demanded all His energies and time. His only quiet times of reflective ministry were in the middle of the night away from the pursuing crowds.

2) Jesus was unlike His disciples who needed to continue to be filled with the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit was fully upon Him. Fasting was not a discipline by which He could come closer to the Father; He was already there.

33 And they said to Him, "The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers; the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same; but Yours eat and drink."

34 And Jesus said to them, "You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you?"

35 "But the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days."

**Why did  
Jesus  
and His  
disciples  
not fast?**

### Questions & Discussion

Why are we to fast?

Jesus leaves no room for doubt about the need of His disciples to fast. Fasting was expected not because He wanted to distribute more food to the poor, but because fasting is an essential spiritual discipline.

**Fasting enables us to:**

- Reinforce the message that we are dead to ourselves. We are not living for our stomachs but to do God's will.
- Prioritize our thoughts on the spiritual world. Operating our physical bodies can easily overrun the more sensitive spiritual senses.
- Open our hearts to God's directions and filling of the Spirit.

Why are we so comfortable not fasting?

If fasting is not part of our Christian lives, then we are:

- 1) Over reliant on the presence of food.
- 2) Deadened to the needs and means of our spiritual natures.
- 3) Making no advances for the sake of God's kingdom.