

Currently our Community Groups are on Summer Break, which means that it is up to each group to decide if and when they will meet over the summer months. It isn't a time away from growth, though, and so we will continue to prepare these Growth Guides as a tool that you can use individually, as a family, or as a group. Community Groups will resume again during the week of September 16, 2012.

Consider...

Use the summary and questions to consider this week's message and its implications in your life:

Message Summary

This week we kicked off a series that will help us take a closer look at the discipline of fasting, perhaps one of the least understood and most ignored disciplines of the Christian faith. To help us get a grasp on the simple idea of what a fast is, Pastor Paul offered the following big idea: **when we fast, we create a physical void and trust it to be filled spiritually.**

1. **We create a physical void...** There's no denying that fasting has a physical component, whether we're fasting from food (nutritional void), media (recreational void), people (social void) or something else. We all understand voids, but the one unique characteristic of a fast is that we **INTENTIONALLY** and **TEMPORARILY** create a physical void. That's right. We do it on purpose.
2. **We trust it to be filled spiritually...** The one aspect of fasting that causes most of us to shy away from it is forgetting that it is a spiritual discipline. We get so caught up in thinking about the physical hunger that we lose sight of the spiritual filling that takes place during the fast. Too many times we try to substitute one physical act for another. We may skip a meal, but we spend the time we would have been eating watching tv or reading a novel instead of spending it in the Lord's presence or doing the Lord's will. Jesus found that doing God's will was actually food that even his own disciples didn't know about. We can, too!
3. **Reasons to fast...** Basically, we covered 4 specific times to fast: when we're in PAIN, when we're in PREPARATION, when we need PERSPECTIVE, and in the daily PRESERVATION of our faith. (You can [download the outline on the site](#) to get all the Biblical references for each of those reasons.)

Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What insight, principle, or observation from this weekend's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain.
- Have you ever fasted? If so, from what and how long? How would you describe the experience?
- Read 1 Peter 5:5 and Colossians 3:12. According to both of these passages we are to clothe ourselves with humility. Read Psalm 35:13 to find out how fasting plays a part in that process. Discuss how fasting can help us practice humility.
- This week, when is a time that you could set aside a meal, a show, or time on the computer (create a physical void) and spend that time with God in prayer or Bible reading (trust Him to fill the void spiritually)? Write it down in order to keep yourself accountable to it!

Commit...

Think and pray through your answers to the following questions in order to commit your life to living out what you've learned this week:

- What are some of the main truths/passages that God wants you to know from this message?
- Based on that truth/passage, what is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?