

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 (Part 3 of our "Beyond Hunger Games" series), we took a turn toward the practical as Phil answered 3 basic questions about fasting: how should we fast, what happens when we fast, and when should we fast. The Big Idea that all of us need to remember is that **fasting is not an EVENT in life to help you RECEIVE as much as it is an ELEMENT of life because you're REDEEMED.**

1. **How should we fast?** Matthew 6 is clear that we need to fast secretly (so we don't steal any glory), humbly (remember that fasting isn't a tool that we use to manipulate God), and with repentant hearts (fasting isn't a cure-all that makes a dirty heart magically clean).
2. **What happens when we fast?** Short answer? Your Father who sees in secret will reward you! Longer answer? We can't always be as sure about what the reward looks like as we are about the fact that He does reward those who fast.
3. **When should we fast?** Surprisingly, there isn't a ton of information in the Bible about "fasting specifics." It's probably safe to draw the conclusion that Jesus, His disciples and the writers of the New Testament lived in a culture that simply expecting fasting to be a normal part of the disciple's life. The details of your fast will often be worked out by the Holy Spirit in your situation. You're not called to be a fasting professional, but you are called to practice fasting. Start small, but start. Fasting is too big of an ingredient of the Christian faith to leave it out any longer!

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.
- How important is it that we are faithful in the Christian disciplines in secret first?
- Read Matthew 6:18 and ask yourself if you truly believe that God **WILL** reward you when you fast. If your answer is no or maybe, your first step is asking God to give you the faith to believe that His promise is true. Perhaps you can relate to Mark 9:24. Aren't you glad Jesus didn't beat that man up for honestly confessing unbelief? He is gracious when we are honest.
- The one main application from this teaching is to fast. Take a moment to write down when you will fast and then come back later and write down how He rewarded you (revelation, provision, etc.):
- I WILL FAST _____ THIS WEEK.
- GOD REWARDED ME BY _____
- Come prepared on Sunday to share with our family the story of God's reward!

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?