

Open Your Heart and Mind

- How do you beat the heat? Do you enjoy this heat in some sense?
- How often do you typically miss a meal? What are the reasons for that?

Finding God in His Word Read Matthew 6:1-18

- As Jesus turns His attention to three common religious practices among the Jews (spiritual disciplines), what are some things in common with these three particular spiritual disciplines?
- What do you think are some of the things God is seeking to teach through these particular spiritual disciplines?
- Why do you think hypocrisy is a constant temptation in practicing our spiritual disciplines? Besides the examples Jesus gives, what does the hypocrisy look like?
- What is your experience with fasting? Have you practiced it? For what reasons? To what effect? What is something (some things) God has taught you in fasting?
- Fasting is not typically a regular spiritual discipline for most Christians. Why do you think this is?
- Pastor Malcolm made the point that fasting should almost exclusively be from food, rather than for example Facebook, because food is something we need and Facebook is not. Do you agree or disagree? Why do you think God sets a fast as abstaining from food?
- Fasting in the Bible often attends very intense times in a person's life (sorrow, repentance, preparation for some activity or work, etc); why do you think fasting is called for in these times? (i.e. Esther 4:16, Joel 2:12-13, Nehemiah 1:1-4, Daniel 9:3-5, Acts 13:2, 14:23)
- If we are fasting for spiritual purposes, why is it important to fast with keeping God at the center?
- How can fasting reveal the things that control us? When you have fasted, what has it revealed to you?
- How is God and His word nourishment to us during a fast?
- In what ways can fasting help one keep balance in their life?

Live the Christ Life

1. If you are medically able to do so, would you consider a short fast (perhaps just two meals in a day) to focus on prayer or Bible reading?

2. Is there something in your life a fast might bring focus or clarity to as you intensely and intently seek God?