

# How to Kill Persistent Sin – Spiritual Fasting

## Matthew 9:14-15 – *Message Discussion Guide*

### Connect

- When was the time you were the hungriest or the thirstiest in your entire life? Why?

### Discover

- Which statement or experience stood out to you from the worship service?
- Read Matthew 9:14-17.
  - How do you think John’s disciples thought Jesus would answer their question in 9:14?
  - In your own words, why did the Disciples of Christ not fast? What did Jesus say would trigger them to begin fasting?
  - There are many biblical reasons to fast, but the words of Jesus in this passage point to very important reason Christians should fast today. What is that reason?
- Read Matthew 6:1-5, 6:16-18.
  - How is fasting just like giving and prayer? What are some reasons Jesus lumps these three spiritual activities together? What danger do they all share?
  - According to 6:16-17, does Jesus expect his followers to fast? How does he indicate this?
  - What are some ways Christians often violate the spirit of Jesus’s commands concerning the face (oiling and washing)?
  - What does 6:1 tell us about our motives when we fast, give or pray?
  - What do you think the “rewards” are that Jesus spoke of in verse 18?
- Read Ezra 8:21-23, Jonah 3:5, 10.
  - What was the motivation for fasting in the Ezra passage? What about the Jonah passage?
  - What are some lessons or principles we can learn about fasting in these two passages?
- Read Isaiah 58:6, Joel 2:12-14.
  - What are some additional benefits to fasting found in these two passages?

### Respond

- How can fasting help Christians overcome persistent sins?
- What are some of the reasons Christians fail to fast consistently?

### Bonus for Thinkers

- Of all the activities the Lord could have given us to do to draw nearer to him, why do you think he chose fasting (abstaining from food for a time)?

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## First Baptist Nacogdoches Bible Reading Plan

| Day               | Scripture                 |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Monday (11/11)    | Matt 6:1-18, Matt 9:14-15 |
| Tuesday (11/12)   | John 15:1-17              |
| Wednesday (11/13) | John 15:18-16:15          |
| Thursday (11/14)  | John 16:16-33             |
| Friday (11/15)    | John 17:1-26              |

# Daily Devotion Questions

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## Monday (11/11) — Matthew 6:1-18, Matthew 9:14-15

- Review the “Respond” questions on the reverse side of this devotion guide.

## Tuesday (11/12) — John 15:1-17

- We learn in these verses that it is important that we “bear fruit” for the Lord. Fruit can include things such as the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, patience...), the fruit of serving the Lord, and the fruit of leading others to faith in the Lord. What kind of fruit is your life bearing for the Lord? Write some down. How pleased is the Lord with the fruit harvest in your life?
- According to 15:4-6, what is the secret to bearing more fruit? How would that look in your life if you did more of that?
- According to 15:5-6, what is the consequence of not abiding in Christ?

## Wednesday (11/13) — John 15:18 – 16:15

- In 15:18-20 we are reminded that when we live for Jesus we will be persecuted and hated. Write down two or three ways you have been mistreated because of your strong stand for Jesus and his word. Ask Jesus to make you bolder every day.
- In today’s passage, Jesus describes the ministry of the Holy Spirit. See if you can identify the following things about the Holy Spirit and fill in the blanks:
  - The Holy Spirit is described with one word. He is a \_\_\_\_\_. (15:26a)
  - The Holy Spirit will bear witness of and tell about who? \_\_\_\_\_ (15:26b)
  - The Holy Spirit is sent to \_\_\_\_\_. (16:7)
  - The Holy Spirit will convict the world of \_\_\_\_\_. (16:8)
  - The Holy Spirit will \_\_\_\_\_ you into all truth. (16:13a)
  - The Holy Spirit will tell you about what is yet to \_\_\_\_\_. (16:13b)
  - Who will the Holy Spirit glorify? \_\_\_\_\_ (16:14)
- In 16:7 Jesus says it is better for him to leave so that the Holy Spirit, who he calls the Helper, can come. Why do you think it is so good for us to have the Holy Spirit? Spend a minute or two and thank the Father for the ministry of the Spirit.

## Thursday (11/14) — John 16:16-33

- Many people are confused about the heavenly Father. They think of him as an angry judge who would like nothing more than to vent his wrath on mankind were it not for the intervention of the loving Jesus. That is a wrong view. Reread 16:27. Write the answer to these questions:
  - What does the Father think toward us?
  - What are the two things the Father wants us to do?
  - Take a few moments and thank the Father for the answer to the first question, and talk to him about your response to the second question.
- In this passage, Jesus speaks of his crucifixion and resurrection. In 16:33 he says the reason he is telling them of his ultimate victory over death is so that they will be able to take heart in difficult times. Write down two or three ways the knowledge of Jesus’ resurrection can help you take heart when things are hard.

## Friday (11/15) — John 17:1-26

- Perhaps the most significant thing about this prayer is that it happened at all. Write down three reasons you believe Jesus was committed to pray to the Father. Write down five reasons you are committed to pray to the Father.
- In 17:3, Jesus says eternal life is about knowing (having a personal relationship with) the Lord. That is our chief objective from today through eternity. What are three things you can do in the next seven days to seek to know him more?
- Beginning in 17:20, Jesus prays for us, believers in Christ who live today! The Bible teaches that he continues to pray for us (Hebrews 7:25). Write down three reasons it is encouraging to know that Jesus is praying to the Father for you today.