

## **Develop Personal Spiritual Habits**

### **Session 6 – Fasting**

#### **Godly Fasting**

- Christian fasting = voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes
- It's always voluntary and must have a spiritual purpose
- There are ways almost everyone can participate in Christian fasting
- Fasting was practiced, taught, and expected by Jesus – Matthew 6:16-18, 9:14-15

#### **Biblical Types of Fasts**

- Content
  - Normal – Water but not food
  - Partial – Smaller meals or restricted foods to experience hunger without being medically disruptive
  - Absolute – Neither food nor water
  - Supernatural – Exceedingly long and physically impossible without God
- Participants
  - Private – a personal fast
  - Congregational – a congregation as a body
  - National – an entire nation
- Frequency
  - Regularly scheduled – annual scheduled days of fasting
  - Occasional – on specific occasions

## Ways to Practice Fasting

- 2 Rules (Matthew 6:16-18)
  - Don't look miserable or talk about how hungry you are!
  - Try not to let others know you're fasting unless it's unavoidable
- There's no Scriptural command regarding how often or how long to fast – God will bless us as we fast
- Fast for a spiritual purpose!
  - To strengthen prayer (e.g. Ezra 8:23)
  - To more clearly discern God's will (Acts 14:23)
  - To express grief for death or sin, in ourselves or others
  - To seek deliverance or protection (2 Chronicles 20:3-4, Ezra 8:21-23, Esther 4:16)
  - To express repentance and return to God (1 Samuel 7:6, Joel 2:12, Jonah 3:5-8)
  - To humble ourselves before God (1 Kings 21:27-29, Psalm 35:13)
  - To express concern for the work of God in the world (Nehemiah 1:3-4)
  - To overcome temptation and dedicate yourself to God (Matthew 4:1-11)
  - To express love and worship to God (Luke 2:37)