



Fasting or Feasting

Fasting is taking time ordinarily used for eating or sleeping and going on a crash study of Bible doctrine or application. Fasting does not gain points with God. It is not dieting. One does not fast to impress God or to persuade Him so that He will be impressed with your asceticism.

Our Lord challenged Matthew to follow Him. Matthew was busy in the tax collector's booth. He was a tax collector. He found Jesus Christ as Savior so he immediately got up and followed Him. Matt. 9:9.

"As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, 'Follow Me!' And he got up and followed Him." (Matthew 9:9, NASB)

In Matthew 9:10-11, Jesus was at a dinner party in Matthew's house. Many tax collectors and sinners were present at Matthew's house and had no illusions about themselves or the religious people who came and looked in to see who was there and sat down. They came in because Jesus Christ was there and was relaxing. Our Lord's disciples were there and were relaxing also. Luke 5:27-30; Mark 2:14-15.

"Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, 'Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?'" (Matthew 9:10-11, NASB)

"After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, 'Follow Me.' And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him. And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them. The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?'" (Luke 5:27-30, NASB)

"As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, 'Follow Me!' And he got up and followed Him. And it happened that He was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many of them, and they were following Him." (Mark 2:14-15, NASB)

Outside Matthew's house, two groups observed great religious feasts that included fasting. There were the Pharisees who were unsaved, religious, and self-righteous. There were also the disciples of John who were saved, religious, and self-righteous.

Inside Matthew's house two groups were with the Lord Jesus Christ. They were the tax collectors who were unsaved Jews (except Matthew) minus self-righteousness. There were also sinners (prostitutes) who were unsaved Jewish girl-friends minus self-righteousness.

Two things happened that night. The group outside criticized Jesus because the group inside had a dinner party instead of fasting. The "disciples of John" (born again legalists and self-righteous believers) put themselves in the same category as the unbelieving Pharisees. They criticized Jesus Christ and His disciples for being inside with the tax collectors and sinners and for not fasting. Matt. 9:14.

"Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?'" (Matthew 9:14, NASB)

Fasting is using time for Bible study and prayer that is normally used for something else such as eating and sleeping. The challenge is whether you are going to be inside feasting with the Lord Jesus Christ or



outside fasting with the self-righteous religious people who do this so they can receive glory. In other words, fasting is often used by the legalistic crowd as a points system. Those who fast are often critical of those who do not fast.