



# SPIRITUAL HABITS

SCRIPTURE, PRAYER & COMMUNITY



- **John Calvin, in the 16th century, said,**
- **Let us say something about fasting, because many, for want of knowing its usefulness, undervalue its necessity, and some reject it as almost superfluous; while, on the other hand where the use of it is not well understood, it easily degenerates into superstition. Holy and legitimate fasting is directed to three ends; for we practice it either as a restraint on the flesh, to preserve it from licentiousness, or as a preparation for prayers and pious meditations, or as a testimony of our humiliation in the presence of God when we are desirous of confessing our guilt before him. (Institutes, IV.12, 14, 15)**



- **Martin Luther wrote,**
- **Of fasting I say this: It is right to fast frequently in order to subdue and control the body. For when the stomach is full, the body does not serve for preaching, for praying, or studying, or for doing anything else that is good. Under such circumstances God's Word cannot remain. But one should not fast with a view to meriting something by it as by a good work.**



- **Martin Lloyd-Jones said in his great book on the Sermon on the Mount,**
- **Fasting, if we conceive of it truly, must not . . . be confined to the question of food and drink; fasting should really be made to include abstinence from anything which is legitimate in and of itself for the sake of some special spiritual purpose. There are many bodily functions which are right and normal and perfectly legitimate, but which for special peculiar reasons in certain circumstances should be controlled. That is fasting.**



# Matthew 9:14-17

- **1. Why aren't Jesus' disciples fasting?**
  - **fasting has been associated with sorrow, mourning, and longing**
  - **expression of broken-heartedness and desperation, usually over sin or over some danger.**
  - **These emotions were not appropriate while Jesus was with them**



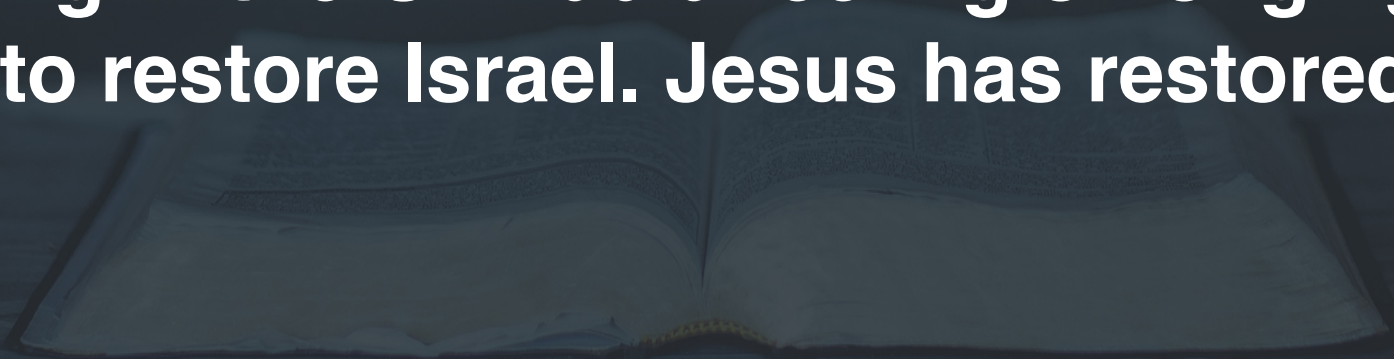
# Matthew 9:14-17

- **“...then they will fast.” v15**
- **shows us that Jesus expects His followers to fast during the appropriate times**
- **Jesus gives us directions on how to fast in Matthew 6**




# Matthew 9:14-17

- **New Patch, New Wine**
  - **Jesus makes a remarkable statement in verses 16 & 17. Its a declaration of a new covenant.**
  - **The new covenant is here and you cant force it into the old testament thinking**
  - **Fasting in the OT had a feeling of longing for God to restore Israel. Jesus has restored us all.**



# Matthew 6:16-18

- **Why are you fasting?**
- **Who is the focus on?**
- **Tips for starting:**
  - **start slow - fast one meal, maybe once a week for several weeks**
  - **have a plan - fasting is not only abstaining from food - its replacing that normal activity with a** **spiritually focused activity**



- **Tips for starting:**
  - **abstain from more than just food - choose to add other time “suckers” to your fast**
  - **don't get discouraged**





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