

On Sunday, we said that we would look at a number of instances in the Bible where fasting occurs. Read the passages below, and consider for each of them what category of fasting they fall into: FERVENT PRAYER, REPENTANCE, DISCERNMENT.

Nehemiah 1:4 – Upon hearing the ruin of Jerusalem

Esther 4:3 – Upon hearing the decree of Ahasuerus that the Jews would be killed

Joel 2:12 – Words of the Lord

Acts 13:3 – Church at Antioch before sending Paul and Barnabas

Acts 14:23 – Establishing church officers, (Paul and Barnabas)

Matthew 9:15 – Jesus approached re: John the Baptist’s disciples and their fasting

1 Samuel 7:6 – Samuel Judges Israel

Jonah 3:5-9 – Nineveh Believes

Leviticus 16:29-34 – Day of Atonement

- Is Fasting required in the Bible?
- What does Galatians 5:13 suggest about whether this is a requirement?
- Based on Sunday’s message, what is the most dangerous mistake that can be made while fasting?
- Pastor Corey said that there is something about Fasting that the Enemy doesn’t want you to grasp. Do you think that’s true? What do you think it is?

Pastor Corey said that:

**GOD IS ALWAYS MORE CONCERNED WITH YOUR HEART THAN YOUR PERFORMANCE.**

- What do you do before God that can be performance minded? Prayer, church attendance, giving, fasting, bible reading, posting scripture online, quoting scripture?
- Why is God not impressed?

John Calvin (1509-1564) writes in his commentary on Matthew:

*“Prayer holds the first rank among the antics of piety: but fasting is a doubtful operation, and does not, like alms, belong to the class of those actions which God requires and approves. It is pleasing to God, only so far as it is directed to another object: and that is, to train us to abstinence, to subdue the lust of the flesh, to excite us to earnestness in prayer, and to testify our repentance, when we are affected by the view of the tribunal of God. The meaning of Christ’s words is: “God will one day show that he was pleased with those good works, which appeared to be lost, because they were concealed from the eyes of men.””*

- What does Calvin mean, “antics of piety”?
- What does it mean that fasting is, “pleasing to God only so far as it is directed to another object”?
- Is this the same as what Pastor Corey said on Sunday that “there is no value in fasting for fasting’s sake”?
- What should be the proper response if you have fasted and haven’t received the outcome you desired?
- Does God promise a reward in fasting?
  - Hint: read Matthew 6:18
  - How does the underlined portion of Calvin’s words above speak to this?