

Introduction: What is God like? What are His traits, characteristics, or attributes? Our view of God supplies a framework for our understanding of God and how we live our lives. In his book, *Your God is Too Small*, J.B. Phillips has pointed out some common distorted views of God. Some people think of God as a kind of celestial policeman who



looks for opportunities to pounce on erring and straying persons. The opposite view is that God is a grandfather figure who is conceived as an indulgent, passive, and kindly old gentlemen. These and other false conceptions of God need to be corrected if our spiritual lives are to have any real meaning and depth.

We can know God only as He has revealed Himself to us. In the next two lessons, we will focus on the attributes (qualities, features) of God’s greatness and attributes of His goodness.

I. GOD’S GREATNESS

A. God’s Spirituality

1. God is a _____, He is not composed of matter and does not possess a physical nature. Jesus stated this clearly in *John 4:24*, “*God is a spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.*”
2. There are, of course, numerous bible passages which suggest that God has physical features such as hands or feet. However, these are attempts to express the truth about God through human analogies. Jesus himself clearly indicated that a spirit does not have flesh and bones (Luke 24:49).
3. God’s spirituality is a contradiction to the practice of _____ and of nature worship. God, being spirit, cannot be represented by any kind of physical object or likeness. His attribute of spirituality is not restricted, nor can it be _____ or _____.

B. God’s Personality

1. The God of the bible is a personal God. He is an individual being, with a self-consciousness and will. He is capable of feeling, choosing, and have a shared relationship with other personal and social beings.
2. When Moses asks God *who shall I tell the Israelites the name of the God who has sent me to deliver them*. God identifies himself as *I AM* or *I will be* (Yahweh, Jehovah, the Lord - Exodus 3:14). God was



demonstrating that He is not some abstract, unknowable force in the cosmos, but a personal and present God.

3. Jesus too, uses this same name for God as He often refers to himself as *I AM* throughout His ministry on earth. By referring to Himself as *I AM*, He is reminding us that the Godhead is personal, near, and accessible to those that call and come to Him.
4. Even more evidence of God's personal nature is his _____. He is depicted in the bible as knowing and communing with human persons beginning with Adam and Eve, apparently on a regular basis. He has all the capacities associated with personality: knowing, feeling, willing, acting.
5. Jesus taught us that He is our Father and our relationship with Him offers the dimension of _____ and _____. He can be approached, spoken to, and in turn He speaks to us.

C. God is _____

1. He is characterized by life. His very name *I AM* (Exodus 3:14) indicates that He is a living God. Biblical scripture never argues that God lives or exist, it simply affirms it, or more often, assumes it. Hebrews 11:6 says *"that anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him."*
2. Throughout the bible the living God is often contrasted with other gods, mostly non-living metal or stone objects. Jeremiah 10:11 states, *"These gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth,"* on the other hand, *"will perish from the earth and from under the heavens."* The one and true God's life is different from that of every living being. While all others have their life in God, He does not derive His life from any external source.
3. The adjective _____ is applied to Him frequently, implying that there never was a time when he did not exist. God's very nature is to exist.
4. While God is independent in the sense of not needing anything else for his existence, God still chooses to relate to us by His own choice. He does so out of His _____ love, rather than out of some kind of need. We as His children are blessed and favored by God. It is our gain that permits us to know and serve Him, and it is our loss if we reject that opportunity – both in this life and eternal life.

D. God is _____

1. He is endless, infinite, and unlimited. God is unlike anything we can experience in this life. He is not subject to limitations of space. He cannot be contained by space. He is omnipresent, He is the all-present God. There is no place where He cannot be found. He brought space and time into being. He was before there was space. Paul said in Acts 17:24, 25, that *God does not dwell in man-made shrines, because He is the Lord of heaven and earth; He made the world and everything in it.*
2. God is _____. He is not restricted by the dimension of time. He was, He is, and he will be. Jude 1:25 says, *“to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power, and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore.”*
3. He does not _____ and _____. There are no variations in His nature at different points within His existence. Human being change from childhood to youth to adulthood to old age. But with God there is no such change. He has always been what He is.
4. The fact that God is not bound by time does not mean that He is not conscious of the progression of points of time. He knows what is now occurring in human experience on earth, under the earth, and above the earth. Someone once described God as someone who sits on a steeple watching a parade – He sees all parts of the parade at the different points on the route rather than only what is going past Him at the moment. So God is aware of what has happened, is happening, and what will happen at each point in time.
5. God sees objectively, but He also sees subjectively. *“...For the Lord sees every heart and knows every plan and thought...”* (I Chronicles 28:9, NLT). No wonder, Psalms 147:5 says, *His understanding is immeasurable.*

Discussion Questions: Why is your view of God so important to your life?_Review God’s personality traits again. Which one or ones impresses you or means the most to you?

Assignments for this week

- 1) Memorize John 1:12
- 2) Accountability Log

Accountability Log

Know Week Four

Week Ending: _____
Prayed w/Prayer Partner: *yes or no*

Name: _____
Memorized Scripture: *yes or no*

Day 1 Time Began _____ Time Ended _____ Scripture _____
Application: [What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through these scriptures?]

Day 2 Time Began _____ Time Ended _____ Scripture _____
Application:

Day 3 Time Began _____ Time Ended _____ Scripture _____
Application:

Day 4 Time Began _____ Time Ended _____ Scripture _____
Application:

Day 5 Time Began _____ Time Ended _____ Scripture _____
Application:

Day 6 Time Began _____ Time Ended _____ Scripture _____
Application:

Day 7 Time Began _____ Time Ended _____ Scripture _____
Application:

Discipler's Comments:

“And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.” - Mark 11:25, NKJV

The topic of forgiveness touches our emotions like few others. It brings up the things of the past that have wounded and hurt us. Forgiveness is much like a trip to the operating room to eradicate a terminal growth in your body - all of it must be removed. Not just some, but all. It is impossible to live on this fallen planet without getting hurt, offended, misunderstood, lied to, and rejected. Learning how to respond properly is one of the basics of the Christian life.

[Together read Matthew 18:21-35 noting the following observations]

- Jesus response to Peter's question in verse 21 is "seventy times seven." This means we are to forgive 490 for the same offense during the same day - in other words Jesus is telling us to "_____."
- We are required to forgive the same way the Father has forgiven us. God's forgiveness is limitless and unconditional, so should our forgiveness be toward others.
- An unwillingness to forgive forfeits God's forgiveness for us and hinders the _____ of God in our lives. *Mark 11:25 says "when we go to pray we must forgive or the Father will not forgive us."*
- We do not have to pay a penance before receiving God's forgiveness; neither should we make others suffer before granting them forgiveness.
- In v. 34, the King James says the wicked servant was turned over to his tormentors. Unforgiveness can _____ us. It can torment our minds and souls by the offense until a root of bitterness takes hold of our lives. Someone has said "Unforgiveness in your heart is to drink and expect someone else to die!" The Bible warns us to be careful that a root of bitterness not spring up in us.
- Unforgiveness not only affects us but also others around us. We need to pass all offenses committed against through the cross. When we compare our hurts to the offense Jesus experienced as He hung in the cross and said "Father forgive them" - how do we say we cannot forgive?

Forgiveness Comes From the Heart

Forgiveness begins with a _____. It is not an emotion. It's a _____. From the heart it is a statement of sincerity. We choose to pardon our offender.

Four Steps to Forgiveness

1. Forgive

- A. The word "forgive" means *to wipe the slate clean, to pardon, to cancel a debt*.
- B. Another definition could be _____.
- C. We are to forgive the offender and sincerely mean it. The act of your will takes place in your innermost being by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is an act of love, mercy, and grace.
- D. Forgiveness is _____. Every day we must choose to forgive. It is a lifestyle.



2. Forget

- A. You must put the offense behind you. It must stay in the past. To bring it up again in the present is to give it life. It is dead, buried, and covered under the blood of Jesus Christ.
- B. Don't dwell on offenses. Remember, we react to what we think about.

3. Release

- A. Release your offenders from all _____. You are acting as judge and jury when you don't release your offenders passing sentence upon them. This is God's place, not yours.
- B. Do not wish evil upon them or desire vengeance.
- C. How we act toward that person may change. It doesn't mean we will put ourselves back into a harmful situation or that we suddenly accept or approve of the person's continued wrong behavior. It simply means we release them from the wrong they committed against us. We forgive them because God forgave us (Ephesians 4:31-32 and Romans 5:8).

4. Bless

- A. When you bless your offenders, you not only loose them, but you also loose

the blessing of God on your life and receive freedom from the heaviness of that root of bitterness (Matthew 5:44).

Discussion Question: What role does prayer play in releasing and blessing your offender?

Look for the New

Read Isaiah 43:18-19, we learn that God wants to do new things in us. When you have forgiven, forgotten, released, and blessed, God is ready to make all things new!

[The Leader/Discipler should end the class by asking each one in the group to write the name of a person or persons on a piece of paper that they may need to forgive. The Leader/Discipler may ask four different students to pray using the *four steps to forgiveness*

– each person taking a step. Each person that leads in prayer should intercede for the entire group. For example, praying “*Father, we ask that you give us the grace to forgive...give us the power to forget and to not dwell on it...*”]

Assignments for this week

- 1) Memorize Mark 11:25
- 2) Accountability Log

“³For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor.” – 1 Thessalonians 4:3–4

**In sanctification subsequent to the new birth, through faith in the blood of Christ; through the Word, and by the Holy Ghost. – Article 6
Holiness to be God’s standard of living for His people. – Article 7**

Sanctification as it is used in the New Testament means *separation to God*, 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2. This sanctification is God’s will and His purpose in our calling by the gospel. It is a work of the Holy Spirit through God’s word as we have faith in the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross of Calvary. As we are a people set apart by God, we become the holy people of God called to purity.

I. What is sanctification?

A. The word “sanctify” in John 17:17 means “_____” (Exodus 28:41; 29:1, 36; 40:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:23).

B. Jesus prayed to the Father for His disciples, *“Sanctify them in truth; Your Word is truth” (John 17:17)*. Just as Jesus was set apart for special use, so are we as believers. The “truth” is communicated in the “Word.” As we hear the Word, we comprehend the truth and obey it. This changes our values, our lifestyle, and a behavioral change takes place. We are changed in our everyday practice.

C. We were made clean through the Word at the new birth. As we obey the Word of God daily, the defilement is washed out of our lives.

D. The Apostle Paul recalls the sanctification of Corinthian believers at their new birth when he wrote, *“But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.” (1 Corinthians 6:11)*.

E. When we as believers make ourselves available to the Holy Spirit, we are changed from the inside out. The Word of God has the liberty in the heart of the Spirit-

controlled Christian to displace sin and replace it with the righteousness of God. The blood of Christ cleanses the believer from actual sin.

1. This initial step in sanctification involves a _____ from the ruling power and love of sin, so that the new believer is no longer ruled or dominated by sin and no longer loves to sin. Paul says, *“So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.... For sin will have no dominion over you,” Romans 6:11, 14.*
2. Paul says that Christians have been *“set free from sin” (Romans 6:18)*. In this context, to be dead to sin or to be set free from sin involves the power to overcome acts or patterns of sinful behavior in one’s life. Paul tells the Romans not to let sin *“reign in your mortal bodies,”* and he also says, *“Do not yield your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but yield yourselves to God,” (Romans 6:12–13)*.
3. To be dead to the ruling power of sin means that we as Christians, by virtue of the power of the Holy Spirit and the resurrection life of Christ working within us, have power to overcome the temptations and enticements of sin. Sin will no longer be our master as it once was before we became Christians.

“At sanctification, the Holy Spirit strips us down until there is nothing left but ourselves. Am I willing to be myself and nothing more? Am I willing to have no friends, no father, no brother, and no self-interest—simply to be ready for death? That is the condition required for sanctification. No wonder Jesus said, ‘I did not come to bring peace but a sword.’ (Matthew 10:34).” – Oswald Chambers in *My Utmost for His Highest*

II. What is Holiness?

- A. *“For the scriptures say, ‘You must be holy because I am holy.’ ” (1 Peter 1:16, NLT)*. Before we can become fruitful disciples, we must understand God’s call for us to be holy as God is holy. To some, that may sound impossible. How can we humans born with a sinful nature become holy? Is holiness truly attainable in the practical sense?

B. Saint means “holy one.” The New Testament saints were the “holy ones.” They were holy because they were “set apart” by God and called to purity. 1 Peter 2:9 reads *“We are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people...”*

1. The Christian life is a life of _____. The Apostle Paul writes in Romans 12:1–2, *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

2. How can the Bible call us the holy ones? To understand, we have to go back to when God let the people of Israel out of bondage in Egypt and made them a special nation. He set them apart. He called them His chosen people and gave them a special commission. He said to them, *“Be holy, because I am holy.”* (Leviticus 11:44)

“This special call to Israel was really not new...the call to holiness was first given to Adam and Eve. This was the original assignment of the human race. We were created in the image of God. To be in God’s image meant, among other things, that we were made to mirror and reflect God’s character. We were created to shine forth the holiness of God.” – R.C. Sproul

III. The Beauty of Holiness

“Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth.” (Psalm 96:9, NKJV)

A. Holiness, as presented in the Scripture, in its _____ and in its _____, is something exquisite and is something desirable. It’s something that we would want if we really understood it and could see how beautiful it is. Holiness of God’s people is one of the greatest needs in the church and in the world today.

B. In the book of Leviticus alone, 386 times you find words that are related to holiness: clean, unclean, holy, sanctified, purity, wash, defiled. In Leviticus, God gave His people detailed instructions about cleansing and ceremonial purity. Why did God take all the time and effort to spell out these specific instructions about every aspect of daily life, worship and ceremonial cleansing? Those regulations were intended to be an object lesson to the people of Israel. He wanted them to see first that He is holy, that God is holy. Secondly, God wanted His people to realize that He is concerned about holiness in every detail and aspect of our lives. That it matters to God that we be clean, pure, holy, and that holiness affects every area of our lives. Thirdly, God wanted His people to understand the _____ that come with holiness; that holy living is a blessed way to live. God also wants His people to see that sin has consequences; that when we don't live holy lives, there are consequences. And that they can be unpleasant, even deadly.

C. As we look at holiness in the New Testament, several things are clear:

1. **Holiness is not an _____.** God's standard for holiness is absolute. There is not to be even a hint of sin in our lives. The question isn't how do we compare to some other family member or some coworker or somebody else in our church. The question is how do we measure up to the holiness of God? That's an absolute, and I might add, impossible standard for fallen human beings. And that's why we need Jesus. That's why we need the cross of Christ.
2. **Holiness is to be _____.** We have a responsibility to be proactive and intentional in our pursuit of holiness. You can't be a passive follower of Christ and be holy. It's not something that happens to you. We need to pursue it. We need to be intentional about it.
3. **Holiness is an _____ and a privilege for every single child of God.** As the Scripture says, *"Let everyone that names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."* (2 Timothy 2:19)

Discussion Question: Why is it important for Christians today to make the pure and holy life such a high priority?

Assignments for this week

- 1) Memorize 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 4
- 2) Memorize Articles 6 and 7 of the Declaration of Faith
- 3) Complete Accountability Log

SAMPLE
LESSON

“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them.” – Ephesians 2:10, ASV

Introduction to Spiritual Gifts

Once we repent of our sins making Christ Savior and Lord, the Holy Spirit begins transforming us by the renewing of our mind through the Holy Spirit working in us (Romans 12:2). The Apostle Paul inspired by the Spirit wrote that this is God’s perfect plan for our lives. Paul goes on to write, “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them” (Romans 12:6).

In Romans 12, we see that the Holy Spirit not only renews us inwardly but outwardly works through us with different gifts distributed to the body of Christ. What are these gifts? There are three main gifts list found throughout various scripture locations in the New Testament: manifestation or worship gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 and 28-30; ministry or motivational gifts in Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Peter 4:9-11; and headship or leadership gifts located in Ephesians 4:7-13 (also known as the five-fold gifting).

Love and Unity Are to Surround Spiritual Gifts

As important as these gifts are to the body of Christ, love and unity must be the climate from which they can operate and flourish. Undoubtedly, the Holy Spirit strategically sandwiched 1 Corinthians 13 (known as the love chapter) in the middle of arguably the two most instructive spiritual gift chapters in all of the New Testament: 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. It’s the love of Christ in the body of Christ that holds it all together. In Paul’s letters to the churches at Rome, Ephesus, and Corinth, Paul is regularly exhorting the church to practice unity, love, and humility as the foundational principles that uphold the workings of the spiritual gifts.

A Closer Look at the Three Spiritual Gifts Listings

I. Manifestation or Worship Gifts

⁷“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: ⁸for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He

wills.” (1 Corinthians 12:7-11).

A. We need spiritual manifestations of God’s Spirit in our worship services today. Why?

1. Spiritual gifts meet the needs of the body of Christ.

- When a body of believers come together, there are usually many needs present. Some may need healing for their body, soul, or spirit. Some may need an encouraging word or a word of wisdom spoken into their lives. Some may need comfort and strength. Some may not need anything but they need to give – give of their talents, time, treasure, or testimony. Some may come needing desperately a miracle, a prophetic word, or some may need faith to move a mountain in their life.
- This is why the gifts have been given to the body – to work through many different people to meet many different needs that results in profiting or building up the entire body of Christ.

2. We are commanded to worship God in Spirit and in truth.

- Truth without the leadership and ministry of the Spirit becomes just knowledge. The Bible says knowledge alone leads to pride.
- When we choose not to release control to the Spirit because of time constraints, formality, traditions, or ignorance, we grieve the Holy Spirit from being manifested in our worship services.

3. Believers and nonbelievers need to see God’s divine power at work today.

- The Apostle John wrote the gospel of John that centered around seven miracles of Jesus for the purpose of Jews believing that Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus himself performed signs and wonders not just to draw large crowds or meet the needs of humanity but that men would believe in Him as Savior and Lord.

B. Defining Manifestation Gifts

1. **Word of Wisdom, 1 Corinthians 12:8** - This gift is a revelation of godly counsel directly from the Holy Spirit. It gives divine insight into a particular need or problem and brings practical application of God's Word. The gift briefly draws on God's unlimited storehouse for the situation at hand (Romans 11:33) but does not raise an individual's personal wisdom to a new level.
2. **Word of Knowledge, 1 Corinthians 12:8** - This gift gives divine insight into the truth of God's word and its application to Christian living. Again it is a temporary revelation from God that goes beyond our own study from God's word. As Paul says, "*We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us*" (1 Corinthians 2:12).
3. **Faith, 1 Corinthians 12:9** - Faith as a gift is a miraculous faith like what we see in the Roman soldier in Luke 7 who believed Christ for the healing of His servant. We also see examples of this in Hebrews 11 and throughout the Old Testament with great men of God such as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, Elijah, Elisha, Daniel and others. The gift of faith can also include the ability to communicate or build faith in others.
4. **Gifts of Healing, 1 Corinthians 12:9** - There are many gifts of healing to match the many kind of diseases and sicknesses. Throughout the New Testament scriptures, miraculous healings led many to salvation. Like the other manifestation gifts, gifts of healing work through the one who ministers to the sick person receiving the gift. The gift is not for the one who ministers the gift, but for the one who receives. In the end, God is to receive the glory.
5. **Working of Miracles, 1 Corinthians 12:10** - The gift of miracles are supernatural demonstrations of the power of God. This can include a timely provision for human need, deliverance from demonic forces, miraculous rescue or deliverance of God's people in life-threatening situations, or a change of favor in the midst of a difficult circumstance (Matthew 14:13-21). These acts of supernatural power produce bring glory to God and defeat the powers of the enemy
6. **Prophecy, 1 Corinthians 12:10** - To prophesy is to speak the word of God boldly. According to 1 Corinthians 14:3-4, the purpose of the gift is to strengthen, encourage and comfort the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit can use any believer within the body of Christ to prophesy. Every manifestation of this gift should be weighed by other the body of Christ to see whether it is in line with Scripture and to determine what God wants us to do concerning the prophetic message (1 Corinthians 14:29). When a prophetic word comes forth it will always in the end glorify God.
7. **Discerning of Spirits, 1 Corinthians 12:10** - Discerning of the Spirit recognizes the true intentions of those within or related to the body. Discernment tests the message and actions of others for the protection and well-being of the body. John warns us not to believe every spirit, but to test them "*to see whether they are from God, because*

many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). Some manifestations come from the human flesh or spirit, some from demon spirits. The Holy Spirit enables us to distinguish the true from the false. The Holy Spirit gives the gift on specific occasions when it is needed.

8. **Different Kinds of Tongues, 1 Corinthians 12:10** - Tongues are languages given by the Holy Spirit spoken through a believer. The language is unknown by the one who speaks. When people speak in tongues the Holy Spirit anoints them and they are spiritually strengthened through union with God. Edification is also experienced individually by a believer who prays, worships, or sings in the Spirit. The apostle Paul said, "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you" (1 Corinthians 14:18). Paul is no doubt speaking of times of personal worship and prayer. He also wrote in 1 Corinthians 14:39, "Do not forbid speaking in tongues." Paul's main concern was that "everything (the practice of the spiritual gifts) be done in a fitting and orderly way in a worship service (1 Corinthians 13:40).
9. **The Interpretation of Tongues, 1 Corinthians 12:10** - The body of Christ is strengthened when a message of tongues is followed with an interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:4). The interpretation of tongues is given in the native language of the congregation. The message encourages the church often moving the church to respond with praise and worship. The interpretation is not a translation, rather it expresses what the Spirit is saying in a way that is clear and understood by all.

Assignments for this week

- 1) Memorize Ephesians 2:10
- 2) Accountability Log
- 3) Go to <http://www.lifeway.com> and take the spiritual gifts survey long form. After taking the survey, record and graph your scores answering the few questions that follow listing your top three gifts. Print the survey results and bring to class next week prepared to share with the rest of the group.

"However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." - Matthew 17:21, NKJV

What is fasting? Why and how should we fast? First, let's define what fasting is. Biblical fasting is going without food. The literal Hebrew translation would be "not to eat." The literal Greek means "no food."

Kinds of Fasts in the Bible

1. Abstaining from all food, not from water (Jesus forty-day fast, Luke 4).
2. A _____ fast (In Daniel 10:3, Daniel abstained from delicacies, meat and wine for three weeks).
3. An _____ fast, abstaining from both food and water (Esther 4:16; Acts 9:9 – both only lasted three days). The human body cannot go with food and water much more than that. Moses and Elijah were engaged in supernatural fasts for forty days.
4. Regular fasts were common and routine (see Zachariah 8:19). The Pharisees boasted fasting twice a week. The most common fast in scriptures was the one day fast.
5. _____ fasts were often practiced in the Old Testament (see Joel 2:15; 2 Chronicles 20:1-4; Ezra 8:21-23). Mosaic law required an annual fast to be observed one day a year on the day of atonement.

Benefits of Fasting

- It _____ us with the will of God (Acts 13:2, 3).
- It helps us humble ourselves before God (Ezra 8:21).
- It empowers us to distinguish between the _____ and _____.
- It fine tunes our ears to hear the voice of God.
- It increases our discipline over our physical man.
- It exposes and helps us *lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, Hebrews 12:1.*
- It can provide _____ in our lives, church, and nation.

Facts to Help You When You Fast

- Determine ahead of time through prayer and counsel what kind of fast you should practice.
- Begin with small fasts - a couple meals to one full day before attempting longer fasts.
- Juice and drink plenty of water when you fast (at least ten glasses a day). If you choose to fast drinking water only, only do so for a few days if healthy enough.

- Headaches usually pass after the second day due to caffeine intake.
- “And *when* you fast...” Matthew 6:16. Jesus expected that His followers would practice fasting combined with prayer regularly.
- In times of prayer and fasting, reserve the time you normally eat to pray, read, and meditate upon God’s Word.
- _____ should be read and practiced as you fast. Fasting is more than just prayer and abstaining from food – it is serving, sharing, freeing, loosing, and healing as well.
- Use a prayer journal when you fast. Write in it throughout your day making note of those things the Spirit of God reveals to you, requests, answered prayers, etc.
- _____ will sustain you physically, spiritually, and mentally as you fast by abstaining from food.
- Weakness and occasional dizziness will be experienced. Get lots of rest when you fast.
- It is good during group or church fasts to come together for prayer and accountability frequently. It is vital that those in the group or church refrain from _____ about the fasts (Matthew 6:16-18).
- It’s always a good idea to consult your physician before fasting especially in cases where you may already may have a health threatening illnesses or diseases such as diabetes, stomach illness, etc.

Discussion Question: Have you ever fasted? Why or why not have you ever participated in a fast? Going forward, is fasting something you are open to practicing? What would be your reason or reasons for fasting? What value do you see in a corporate church fast?

Assignments for this week

- 1) Memorize Matthew 17:21
- 2) Accountability Log