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Exalting, Equipping, Evangelizing

Bible Study

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“SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES DURING THE HOLIDAYS”

We are about to encounter the time of the year when many of us as believers mess up! We mess up in our eating, we mess up in our spending, and we mess up in our celebrations! We don't plan to mess up, we don't intend to mess up and honestly we don't want to mess up!! However, the fact of the matter is many of us as Christians will find ourselves between now and December 31st messing up!!! So how can we as Christians do a better job of not messing up during the holidays? Two words – spiritual discipline! That will be our focus for these upcoming Bible Study lessons.

I. What Is The Purpose of Spiritual Discipline?

1. The purpose of spiritual discipline is to develop habits that promote spiritual growth and godliness.
1st Timothy 4:7-8

II. Fourth Spiritual Discipline That Promotes Godliness – Fasting

1. Biblical definition of fasting:
 - A Christian's voluntary abstinence from food for spiritual purposes.
2. Modern definition of fasting:
 - A Christian's voluntary denial of a normal function for spiritual purposes.
3. Several kinds of Biblical fasts:
 - Normal fast – abstaining from all food, but not water. *Matthew 4:2*
 - Partial fast – abstaining from some food, but not all food. *Daniel 1:12*
 - Absolute fast – abstaining from all food and liquid. *Esther 4:16*
 - Private fast – A fast between a Believer and God. *Matthew 6:16-18*
 - Congregational fast – a fast that involves the congregation. *Joel 2:15-16*
 - National fast – a fast that includes an entire nation. *2nd Chronicles 20:1-4*
4. Lengths of Biblical fasts:
 - One day *Judges 20:26*
 - Three days *Esther 4:16*
 - Seven days *2nd Samuel 12:16-23*
 - Twenty-one days *Daniel 10:1-3*
 - Forty-days (Moses and Jesus) *Deuteronomy 9:9-11; Matthew 4:1-2*
5. Reasons for Fasting
 - To seek God's guidance.
 - To pray for the salvation of the lost.
 - To express repentance for sin.
 - To overcome temptation and strongholds.
 - To minister to the needs of others.
 - To express love and devotion to God.

Brothers and sisters, fasting is a spiritual discipline that will promote spiritual growth and godliness in our lives. Remember, Jesus said some things only happen because of prayer and fasting.