

Fighting our way to intimacy with God

Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his command-ments are not burdensome. For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

(1 John 5:3-5)

Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit. So let's not get tired of doing what is good. At just the right time we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don't give up. (Galatians 6:8-9)

If you are fasting with us, you may be getting into the “what did I get myself into?” phase. Fasting, whether you're fasting from food or something else you love, is difficult by design. More than any other spiritual discipline, fasting brings clarity. Fasting helps us identify things we are addicted to (also known as “idols”) and provides opportunity for us to confront them. It is in the confrontation process that issues arise. “Is this (fill in the blank) really that bad for me? If I resist the desire right in front of me and, instead, give my time and attention to God will I really derive a long-term benefit?”

Selfishness is hard-wired into our DNA. We want (deserve?) what we want, and our sinful nature screams with complaint when it is denied the smallest bequest. Our flesh is ferociously demanding and will not be ignored—it must be put to death (Colossians 3:5). Fasting is the way that happens. As we starve our flesh nature (food, social media, sleep, etc.) and feed our spiritual nature (worship, prayer, Bible study, etc.) then, in cooperation with the Holy Spirit, we begin to develop the attributes of Jesus (John 15:5; Galatians 5:22-23).

Remember, we're talking about Loving God.

So don't quit. Now is the time to renew your commitment. It was a God-ordained choice to embark on this journey of prayer and fasting, and there IS a blessing at the end of it. If you have stumbled along the journey, simply begin again. You will find strength for your spiritual journey, and a fresh, new intimacy with Lord if you will just “not get tired of doing what is good.” Stay the course. We can do this together.

Pray

Thank you, Heavenly Father, for loving me in my weakness. I am painfully aware of the things in my life that separate me from You, and I hate them. Thank you for providing for me a path to intimacy with you, albeit through discomfort and struggle. I am looking forward to the finish line and victory.

DAY 5
Friday, January 12th

RECURRING NEEDS

Revival
Repentance
Wisdom
Marriages
Families
Sick/Grieving
Depression/Mental illness
City Church
Church leaders
Children
Youth
Singles
Senior citizens
Volunteers
Teachers and support staff
Emergency personnel
Business community
Elected officials
Missionaries
Worldwide church
The lost

REFLECTIONS
