



“Moreover, when you fast...” - Matt. 6:16

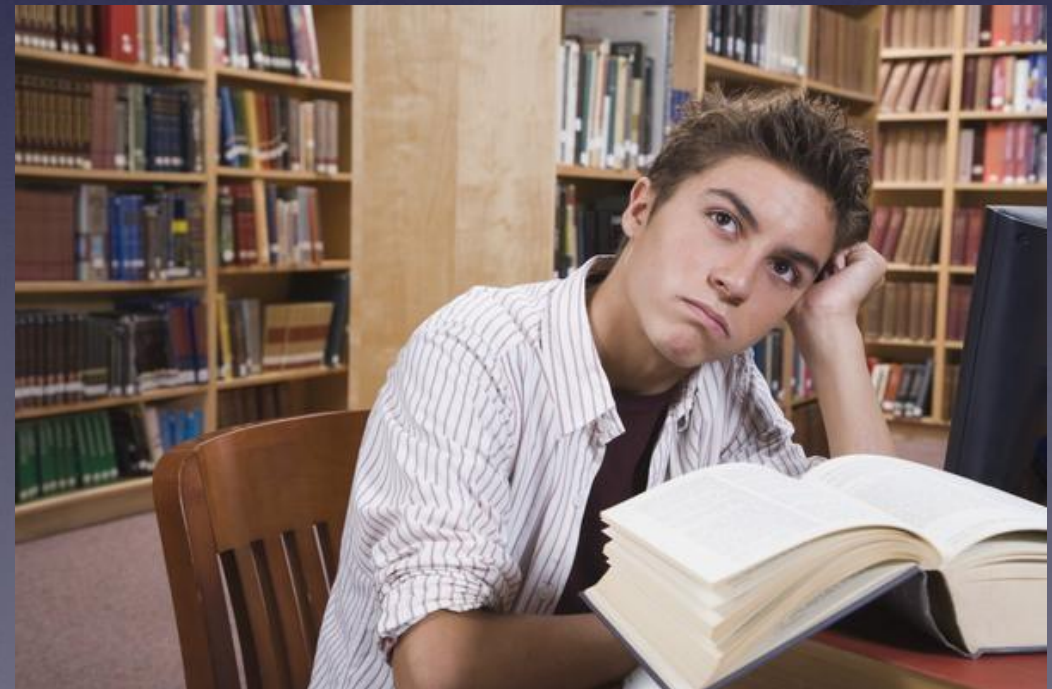
Principles of Fasting

The Great Fast

- A journey
- Our responsibilities during this journey
 - Fasting, prayer, and almsgiving
- How can I benefit from fasting?

Problem: Formalism

- Merely external activity
- May become simply a dietary burden
- Origins of formalism
- Formalism only ties us to a tradition rather than to God



Principle 1: It is not easy

- It is a challenging choice
- Consider Adam and Eve
- Compare the philosophies of the world and the Lord Christ's commands
- “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.” (Matt. 5:4)
- “Most assuredly, I say to you that you will weep and lament, but the world will rejoice; and you will be sorrowful, but your sorrow will be turned into joy.” (Jn. 16:20)



Principle 1: It is not easy

- Compare the philosophies of the world and the Lord Christ's commands (cont.)
 - “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” (Matt. 19:21)
 - “Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able.” (Lk. 13:24)
 - “For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.” (Matt. 18:20)

Principle 2: Expect greater spiritual warfare

- “This kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” (Matt. 17:21)
- Satan will begin to tempt you with the importance of food/eating
- God is able to preserve your life without it
- “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” (Matt. 4:4)

Principle 3: Growth is gradual

- Growth in fasting is tailored with your father of confession



Principle 4: Requires Seriousness

- Anything of significance in life should be do with the utmost seriousness
- 5 Foolish Virgins
- Am I serious? Or do I make excuses?
- This world will NEVER provide you with the right circumstances to live with God.



Principle 5: Fasting is temporary

- “In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (Jn. 16:33)



How will you fast?

“Do you fast? Give me proof of it by your works. If you see a poor man, take pity on him. If you see a friend being honored, do not envy him. Do not let only your mouth fast, but also the eye and the ear and the feet and the hands and all the members of our bodies. Let the hands fast, by being free of avarice. Let the feet fast, by ceasing to run after sin. Let the eyes fast, by disciplining them not to glare at that which is sinful. Let the ear fast, by not listening to evil talk and gossip. Let the mouth fast from foul words and unjust criticism. For what good is it if we abstain from birds and fishes, but bite and devour our brothers? May He who came to the world to save sinners strengthen us to complete the fast with humility, have mercy on us and save us.”

– St. John Chrysostom